



CLAY ALLISON & ^{*}debut single
DREAM SYNDICATE
CHESTERFIELD KINGS
CHRIS WILSON/all the usual grist

Fetid Thoughts



Hey, we've reached issue 8 and we've also reached something of a problem! We are, as Sir Doug once sang, "At The Crossroads" and I'm having serious misgivings as to whether we can continue. We're now devoting ninety per cent of each issue to new bands which means that it's paramount we appear on a regular basis - no gaps of a year between issues!! Otherwise material quickly becomes out of date. Bucketfull has always been little more than a two man operation, just Christine and myself doing everything, and it's beginning to tax us to the limits to get the thing out even 3 times a year. Certainly without the help of super typist Roy Wilbraham and the hard work of Jon Storey on tape transcriptions, No.8 would never have appeared. Also it's become apparent that readers are divided as to our coverage, those who dig the Sting-rays don't like reading about Moondog for example: somehow the Blue Cheer and the Milkshakes make for uneasy bed partners!!! In addition I'm keen to present more actual music in the shape of records but this is financially impossible. I'm really pleased to offer the debut 45 by Clay Allison with this issue for only a token price but it's going to almost break our meagre supply of money! And for this issue only we've boosted the size up to 36 pages to fit everything in! Therefore I'm toying with the idea of starting up a mag. in cassette format. What do you think? We need to know your ideas. Issue 9 will appear shortly: we're hoping to feature The Long Ryders, Ellery Bop, Game Theory, TVP's amongst others - famous last words, huh?

OK let's move on to pleasanter topics. John Frankovic bass player with Milwaukee's wonderful Plasticland was here in October and blew a few minds as he walked down Portobello Road in one of his psychedelic jackets! The outcome of his European trip is an album on Eva subsidiary, Lollita which, I gather, will contain many of the cuts from their early and now exceedingly rare 45's plus some obscure sixties cover versions; there's also talk of an elpee of new material for Irish label Kabuki. Meanwhile Rough Trade have imported copies of the group's fifth and best single - "Euphoric Trapdoor Shoes" b/w "Rat Tail Comb" - the A-side is incredible with the best fuzz guitar since Dick Taylor left the Pretty Things. Buy it and enjoy

I've received quite a few magazines since issue 7: 99TH FLOOR being the most informative and enjoyable. It's produced by Ron Rimsite, 145 Marks Place, North Bergen, New Jersey 07047, USA and issue 5 is dynamite with features on sixties bands such as the Blues Magoos and the Lollipop Shoppe, articles on Plasticland, United States of Existence, Mad Violets plus a flexi disc featuring cuts from the Fuzztones, the Vipers and Plasticland. It's \$2 plus postage from Ron at the above address. A cool 'zine indeed. For all of you who wrote in demanding more Velvets connected articles after our Moe Tucker piece, allow me to recommend WHAT GOES ON, produced by the Velvet Underground Appreciation Society, 15 Green St. #73, Cambridge, Mass. 02139, USA. Issue 3 features an interview with Andy Warhol, a piece by Lester Bangs on Nico, Byron Coley in conversation with John Cale plus stacks more. Not sure of the price but a couple of IRCs to the above address should obtain you a reply. For German readers, why not check out a promising fanzine called The Glitterhouse available from Reinhard Holstein, Lange Str. 41, 3471 Lauenforde, W. Germany: the latest edition contains stuff on the Violent Femmes, 39 Clocks, The Cramps etc. Finally a quick plug for a cassette magazine out of New York City, Bang Zoom which, in its most recent issue, has interviews with R.E.M., Rank and File and the Gun Club plus unreleased material from the Replacements and live sounds from Jeffrey Lee & Co. Rough Trade shop has copies.

Stacks of good new records around: in the way of 45s, I've been impressed by the Smithereens 12", the second single by Micro Disney "Pink Skinned Man" (Kabuki), The Pretenders' "2,000 Miles" and the TVP's "A Sense of Belonging" plus two debut records from a new label Creation Artefact, Bif Bang Pow's "50 Years of Fun" and the early Floyd/Electric Prunes influenced "Flowers In The Sky" by the suitably named Revolving Paint Dream. More on this stuff next issue. Apart from the albums reviewed in No.8. I'm getting pleasure from recent stuff by If Then Why, Game Theory, Felt, Bone Cabale, Violent Femmes, The Fleshtones, The Neats, T-Bone Burnette and True West (Hollywood Holiday). Oldies but definitely not mouldies on the HQ turntable include the Merry Go Round, Music Machine, Beatles' Revolver and Tim Buckley's Greatest Hits on Rhino.

To finish with a bunch of thank you's. Firstly to Kelly Mayfiel, Colin Hill, Chip Lamey, Tony Moon, Jon and Roy for their contributions and help with B.O.B. 8. Special thanks to Christine for all her hard work on the layouts. Also thanks to Gary Stewart, Ethan James, Jan Seedman, Lisa Mitchell, Amy, Jim Keylor and The Rain Parade for all their help whilst I was in California. A special big thank you to Danny Benair and his folks for letting me stay with them. Last but not least a round of "For he's a jolly good fellow" to Byron Coley whose generosity, sense of humour and assistance made my stay on the West Coast so enjoyable. Cheers chums.

You'll be hearing from us.

Byeee.

Nigel

Bucketfull of Brains, 58a Abbotsford Avenue, London N15 3BS.

Printers: Lithosphere, 203/205 Pentonville Road, London N1.

Editor/Publisher: Nigel W. Cross.
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All back issues are sold out.

Bucketfull of Brains is on sale at Rocks Off, Vinyl Solution, Rock On, Compendium Books, Rough Trade Shop in London. Some back issues may be available from Reiner Knorr, Bruch Str. 2, 4720 Beckum 2, West Germany. (Expect to pay more in shops as they have to make a profit).

the
birth



Photo by Laura Levine

of CLAY ALLISON

Fortunes are forever changing on the merry-go-round of pop music: a year ago Kendra Smith was still very much a part of the Dream Syndicate whilst her boyfriend David Roback was one of the main guiding lights of the Rain Parade. Twelve months later the two of them are out on their own, finding new paths and directions with their recently formed outfit, Clay Allison.

Whilst spending a couple of weeks in Los Angeles last Autumn I passed some pleasurable time in the company of David and Kendra. It was an exciting time for them: the debut album by the Rain Parade was about to be released and alongside it the "Rainy Day" LP which saw the two of them working and collaborating with other young L.A. musicians.

"Rainy Day" (Enigma 1024) turned out to be one of 1983's most intriguing releases, not least because it brought together various members of the Dream Syndicate, The Bangles, The 3 O'Clock and the Rain Parade to perform a collection of mid sixties folk and pop songs. The whole project was produced and directed by David Roback so when we met up for breakfast at the Penguin Restaurant in Venice, L.A., I asked him all about the background to the album: "It started just by wanting to record some songs we liked. I wanted to record some songs I'd played at home. It was about nine months ago. At that point I decided that I could have a baby or make the "Rainy Day" album. I figured making the album would be better. It was very spontaneous. It never started out as a David and Kendra project, it started as me trying to work with all these different people whom I'd always wanted to do things with. I just called them up and asked them if they wanted to do it. We'd all talked before about doing something like this. I asked Mike (Querico) and Sue (Hoffs) and Kendra to pick a couple of songs they wanted to do and I gave some suggestions of which songs they should do."

It's an eminently listenable album, certainly one that bears up to repeated plays. It's not an earth shattering experience but's pleasant and some of the cuts are a delight. Dealing with the less successful tracks first, "On The Way Home", a Neil Young song doesn't fare too well with Roback's

vocals unable to lift the song out of a dirge-like state whilst the title track "Rainy Day, Fade Away" is something of a disaster, getting bogged down in a morass of jamming guitars and endless improvisation that not even the usually rivetting fretwork of Karl Precoda can rescue. I tackled David over it's inclusion as somehow it doesn't quite gell with the other songs: "It wasn't my idea, I just went along with it. I think it was either Karl's or Ethan's (James who engineered the record). I should have mixed the conga track louder 'cos it's really captivating!!' It was very spontaneous, we just did it. I think Karl's guitar playing is the best thing on it!"

"Holocaust" (from Big Star's 3rd album) is a stellar cut with Kendra Smith giving the most moving vocal performance of her career thus far. Every line aches with an anguish that surpasses even Chilton's and the piano adds an air of doom to proceedings. Kendra's other singing contribution, on the Buffalo Springfield's "Flying On The Ground Is Wrong" is nearly as fine, her voice milking the ballad for every last ounce of tenderness and sadness. Sue Hoff's contributions to the album show that she may have an enduring talent, something that her performances with The Bangles have failed to illustrate: her singing on the Dylan song "I'll Keep It With Mine" is inspiring and it's to her credit that this version holds it's own against other superlative readings of this tune by the Fairport Convention and by Dylan himself. Hoffs ain't no Nico but again she infuses "I'll Be Your Mirror" with enough charm to carry it off. On the inclusion of these two covers Roback comments: "They were songs that Sue and I used to play when we were in a band together a few years ago called The Unconscious, very short lived. There's an old film of us playing in that band, it's pretty interesting but we moved on because we were holding each other back. We didn't want to sing together we didn't like the sound of the male and female voice together. I'm very proud of "I'll Keep It With Mine" on the record: Sue's vocals and performance are classic and inspired".

Mike Quercio's renditions also come out well, on the whole, though his frivolous treatment of "Sloop John B" is not to my taste. "John Riley" however is an ace with plenty of guts and emotion, characteristics one could hardly apply to his work with The 3 O'Clock: this is almost on par with The Byrd's version on "5D". Enjoying this as much as I do, I asked David to explain it's place on the record: "That was Mike's idea. We were going to do "Catch The Wind". I learned it on guitar but Mike turned up at the studio and said he wanted to do "John Riley" instead". All in all "Rainy Day", despite it's piscine depths of loneliness and despair, is a record to be treasured and I'm pleased to say that Rough Trade are releasing it here in the U.K. in the very near future.

One of the most important aspects of "Rainy Day" is that it represents the first recorded fruits of collaboration between David and Kendra, something which Clay Allison will allow them to do more fully. Back in September Clay Allison was very much a secondary project which ran side by side with The Rain Parade. Kendra also had only recently left The Dream Syndicate and my curiosity was such that I had to question her about leaving such a successful band. Kendra: "The main reason was that my role in it was limited. When the band first started, there was much more improvisation; we developed the songs together and then it became more and more one person finishing a song and bringing it in. Everybody got a little more uptight about live shows which I think is a normal progression in what happens with most bands. We started touring and people started getting bigheaded, full of self importance. Touring was fun but it was the hardest I've ever worked in my life. I decided that if I was going to like roll the carpet for someone else, it just wasn't fun any more. I wanted to start writing songs, I was getting bored just playing bass. When we started it was good, I could act up and jam. There was that song "It's Going To Be Alright" which we used to play all the time, it was totally open for everybody. But it was getting so the openness was only for Steve and Karl to yank off for a whole show whilst Dennis and I had to be perfectly well behaved. The official statement was that I quit because I didn't like touring which is absolutely stupid. I wanted to work with David and the band were demanding a total commitment of all my time and life which just wasn't a good enough return".

In it's embryonic stages last summer Clay Allison was very much a studio concept which was to quote David "Without players with individual influence and strong identities (except myself and Kendra). But we yearned to become a group. Terry Graham was brilliant and facile on drums, but his involvement with The Gun Club and his personal tastes always stood between him and total involvement". Terry, Kendra and David actually went into the studio and recorded though Roback now maintains that "We are not going to release our early recordings because we feel we have already outgrown them and they reflect what now seems to be an old state of mind". By the way the name Clay Allison "Comes from that of a gunfighter's from the Old West. We took it out of context and thought it had a lot of other associations that were interesting". Originally the music, according to Kendra had "A folk base but it's more warped and electric". At that point in time Kendra felt that Clay Allison was very influenced by Bert Jansch, Tim Buckley and Stones material like "Im' Waiting" and "Flowers Inbetween The Buttons" though David added that such ideas were "A complete afterthought". As we sat crunching toast and drinking coffee in the Penguin that morning, Roback was eager to explain some of the basic ideas behind the music he was writing for Clay Allison: "I tend to write a lot about weird morbid fantasies but I don't write about the morbid aspects of life. It's more the spiritual side of living in a morbid world, what becomes of it if you transcend that morbidity. I try to think about children when I write. Certain nursery rhymes are very morbid like "Ring Around The Roses" from the plague years. Like "This Town" is a children's song and on another level a very morbid song for adults. Children don't usually see the morbidity of things. It's interesting to note how

photograph of Clay Allison by Laura Levine



l-r: Keith Mitchell, Kendra Smith, Juan Gomez, David Roback

childlike Kendra's artwork is for the front sleeve of "Rainy Day" !

A couple of months after our conversation, Clay Allison played it's debut show at The Pyramid Club on New York's Lower East Side in late December. It was an acoustic set with David, Kendra and Will Glenn on violin, warming up before The Rain Parade played. However less than two weeks later fate dealt a crippling blow: David Roback was given the sack from The Rain Parade. When I spoke to him on the phone during the first week of 1984 he was "heart-broken", saying that "The band meant almost everything" to him. It must come as a great blow to Rain Parade fans too: as I write it would seem that Matt, Will and Steven will carry on but I've had no official word. Whatever Clay Allison continues and their first recordings are to be found enclosed in Issue 8 of this magazine in the shape of a debut 45: "Fell From The Sun" is written by Kendra and is the A-side whilst a joint Roback/Smith composition "All Souls" is the flip. I'm delighted that we can offer readers the chance to hear some truly original unorthodox music and hopefully the record will pave the way for a debut album which will feature the aforementioned two songs plus a further seven or eight originals and possibly a European tour. The music has changed quite dramatically with the current line-up moving away from the stripped down folk sound to what David describes as a "More dark and instrumental area, owing a lot to groups like Weather Report, The Doors etc", which comes in part from "long free form electric jam sessions that were very hypnotic and had a very oriental inclination very guitar and organ influenced". He sees the current Clay Allison material falling roughly into three categories: "1) Oriental and haunting songs, very electric, 2) Dark folky but electric and drippy ballads that usually feature Kendra's spectral voice, 3) Somewhat more baroque country ballads, adding that the group "don't want to be like other bands in that (we) don't feel tied to any particular period and/or roots. (We) want to move further away from the pop or traditional rock sounds of bands like The Rain Parade or Dream Syndicate. (We) feel allied with something that pops up in all genres of music. (We) feel music has a lot to do with creating a mood and reaching people who need something".

Apart from David guitar and Kendra bass and most of the lead vocals, the band features guitarist Juan Gomez who was formerly in The Romans, then The Human Hands with Dennis Duck: now they're a band who deserve an article to themselves but all we've got room for here is to send you off after an interesting

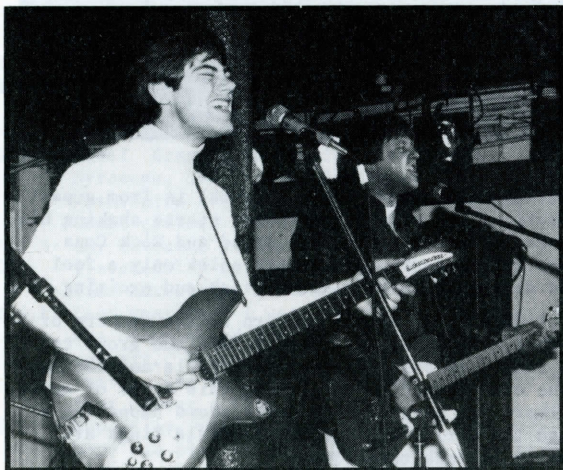
retrospective double LP and 45 set on Independent Project Records which will give you a good idea of this bizarre brand of subversive industrial pop music. David describes him as a "versatile organist, soft spoken and intelligent always stood out to us as a remarkably nice person". They've also recruited a new drummer, an old friend of Kendra's, Keith Mitchell who used to play in a late seventies L.A. band, Monitor. During his time with The Rain Parade, David could never find a percussionist who suited the music he was writing a hundred per cent. So it was with great interest that I learn t that Mitchell fitted in perfectly: "I knew Keith would be perfect for us when we were playing one of our new songs, "Lullaby" with him and he started playing these great ambient and rhythmic droning drums. It turns out he loves tabla and played in a Pakistani band. Finally I'm playing with a drummer who loves what I love". The group will probably remain as a quartet though Sylvia Juncosa former organist with The Leaving Trains (whose debut LP Roback has produced) has been jamming with them recently. The idea of using an

organ is important to Roback as it was he who suggested to The Rain Parade that they add an organist and he helped Will Glenn to develop that sound.

If it isn't already apparent I'm tremendously excited and enthusiastic about the music of Clay Allison, their potential seems limitless and both Kendra and David deserve the success, I hope, they will encounter in the coming months. I just wish they were over here now playing this remarkable brand of music - we need a waft of fresh air and unpredictability. Anyway I'll let Mr. Roback have the last word meanwhile do enjoy the record: "Clay Allison has no desire to make it on dance band circuits. We're not interested in that at all. We're just interested in playing for an audience no matter how large or small. We feel there are a lot of people spread around who would be interested. Kids are taught that liking music like this is very uncool but I think eventually things will change and that very superficial trend will disappear like it always does every five or six years".

Nigel

THE SURFADELICS



Let's face it, no band in their right mind would choose a name like The Surfadelics, but frustration can often lead to recklessness, as in this case.

The band, that is: Tony Bernstein (drums); Ken Lupton (bass), Barry Lancaster (guitar) and finally, Mark Bell (a.k.a. Dickie) on (vocals and guitar), first picked up their instruments (and started to learn to play them!) in November '82, and within a few weeks found themselves playing a friend's Christmas party. At this time, the band was calling itself The Prisoners, after the TV series, as opposed to the Medway Prisoners, who named themselves after a song by The Vapors. The discovery of another band with their name sent them into a panic, and a change of name followed. I am led to believe that this happened a couple of times, resulting in the band striving to find a name so positively ridiculous that they wouldn't have to change again. So the band came to be called The Surfadelics.

All the band live in Stratford, East London; three of them went to the same school, Tony being the exception, and all but Ken grew up on the same estate. They spent most of '83 playing around their locality, especially in pubs such as The Green Man, where they played a pre-Christmas Beach Party with another local band, The Kick. At the end of November, they played their first proper London gig, at The Clarendon as support to The Prisoners.

This was my first sight of them, and I was impressed. The gig in question came a year after I had first seen The Prisoners, so perhaps it was appropriate. They had been given the support after Barry had presented Nick Garrard with a tape of the band. Barry is very much the driving force behind the band, using what time he has during the day (he does nightwork) to do all he can to get work for the band. He also drives the Chevy van which has become their sole mode of transport.

One advantage of that name (i.e. Surfadelics) is that is a fair description of the band's music - hard-driving pop with the occasional Ventures-style guitar break! Some songs' influences are easier to pinpoint than others, such as 'Girls Are Running' - very Creation/Cream - in fact it could fit in with The Prisoners' 'Go-Go' obsession! Then there's 'Bad Little Girl', Milkshakes meet The Barbarians, and this is what we find when the smoke clears. Wonderful stuff I say. But in my humble opinion the high point is 'You Just Bring Me Down', which they seem to extend with every gig. Of late, the band has ended their set with a version of 'Louie Louie', which could just as easily be called 'Hang On Louie', or for the really historical, 'My Girl Louie!'. Well deserving of a place on 'Best of Louie Louie Vol.2', whenever Rhino think it's enough of a wheeze to put another LP out. At their recent gig at New Merlin's Cave, this song was performed (no other word will do!) with Dickie sitting on the drum kit, shades on, looking down on the (albeit sparse) crowd, and yet still managing to look as mean as a ginger kitten!

For the sheer love of the music, I have found myself taking an advisory role in the band's career, primarily to steer them clear of the various sharks who still inhabit these waters. As such I can tell you this:

- 1) Don't expect any records from them, at least til Summer; they're not ready yet, and fully accept this.
- 2) They are willing to work very hard, and do so when given the opportunity.
- 3) They're a lovely bunch to know, but will keep messing up my hair!

As to the future, at the end of February, they intend to record a new demo, and hope to set up their own tour of France and The Netherlands, and anywhere else that wants them.

So, contrary to all the 1984 gloom and doom nonsense that so many are peddling, I am looking forward to the rest of the year. The Surfadelics are a major factor in that.

W. Lynne Aldridge

KEEPING THE SPIRIT OF 1966 ALIVE THE CHESTERFIELD KINGS



Photo: l - r: Greg, Rick, Doug, Andy and Ori.

The past few years have been extremely busy for Rochester, New York's The Chesterfield Kings. They've had to battle trendy new wave tastes as well as heavy metal madness to spread the gospel of garage rock, yet things are paying off. Their first two singles are long out of print, their third has gotten lots of airplay and their debut album has been praised by most critics and is selling well. The Chesterfield Kings have even been fortunate enough to have their video of "99th Floor" shown on MTV.

I feel sorry for those who don't live in the North East section of the United States, because they've missed out on one of the swingiest, hottest bands ever to step on a stage. This band rocks with the intensity of The Seeds or Music Machine, they can be as cryptic as The Chocolate Watch Band, or they can dish out jangling folk-rock that would make Roger McGuinn proud. Just about every number is an obscure gem from the mid-sixties (although the group is now including a few originals) but they play with so much enthusiasm and passion this is far from another Sha Na Na trip. The Chesterfield Kings believe in the sounds they're making and their lifestyle reflects it. Offstage as well as on, the guys in the Kings look as if they just stepped out of a moldy issue of *KRLA Beat* or *Boston Teen Scene*. This isn't a show, this is just Greg Prevost (vocals), Doug Meech (drums), Andy Babiuk (bass), Rick Cona (lead guitar) and Ori Guran (organ/rhythm guitar) trying to make some sense out of this crazy world.

Although The Kings' shows are always packed with wide-eyed crazed, fun loving kids and lovers of garage rock from the sixties who favourably compare them with those who inspired them, there are some who don't understand the magic of The Chesterfield Kings. One thing the hacks who write for *NME*, *Melody Maker*, *Sounds*, *Rolling Stone*, *Rock*, etc. will never understand is that music can be based on past traditions, rock hard, be simple and not preach and still be worthy of your attention. But those pen pushers probably wouldn't enjoy pro wrestling, watching the three Stooges, or the humour of Uncle Floyd either.

To fully appreciate and enjoy The Chesterfield Kings you have to be willing to have fun, let loose and

dance. Sure, most of their material is from a past generation, but when Greg Prevost starts shaking his maracas or banging his mike stand and Rick Cona dishes out those frantic guitar solos only a fool would deny this doesn't sound fresh and exciting.

All of this is of little concern to the members of The Chesterfield Kings. They formed the group to have fun, play some parties, meet girls and because no one else seemed to be playing this style of music. Now there are garage/psychedelic shows happening all around the world, and The Chesterfield Kings are becoming legends themselves.

Until they get out of the North East, you'll have to take my word that The Chesterfield Kings are one of the most enthralling bands playing today. However, you can pick up their album from Mirror Records, 645 Titus Avenue, Rochester, N.Y. 14617, U.S.A. It's a cool slice of vinyl that promises great things from them in the future.

Recently, I had the chance to chat with their wild frontman Greg Prevost. Besides being a respected record collector, Greg has edited and published two fanzines, *Future* and *Outta Site*. He's also written for many other publications including *Blitz*, *Kicks*, and *Gorilla Beat*. Greg spends a good portion of his free time tracking down his heroes. But, these days Greg doesn't have much free time, as the Chesterfield Kings are taking off. Order their album today and be ready for the second one, as it's sure to be a killer.

B.O.B: Where were you born and raised?

GREG: In Rochester, N.Y.

B.O.B: How did you first experience music?

G.P: The Beatles on the Ed Sullivan Show. Then The Stones. That got me hooked.

B.O.B: Did you play in any bands prior to The Chesterfield Kings? I know you made a record with The Distorted Levals, but were they a real performing band?

G.P: I was in many bands. All lousy and awful, not worth mentioning. Distorted Levals was a real group. We played at parties. That sort of stuff. Real short lived. Our bass player quit right before the 45 came out.

B.O.B: For a long time you were known for being a fanzine publisher and writer for other zines. What made you decide to start performing?

G.P: I had played guitar in the mid-sixties with my cousin. We did Rolling Stones and Yardbirds stuff. That was around 1966. I've been interested in performing for years, I just never found any other interested musicians after 1970, 'till The Chesterfield Kings in '78.

B.O.B: Did you know the other guys in the Kings before you decided to perform with them?

G.P: I knew all the guys in the group. First Doug and Rick and then Andy and Ori. I couldn't play guitar very well, or anything else for that matter. I guess that's why I decided to stick to primitive vocals, being a big James Brown and Mick Jagger fan. I guess I try for that style.

B.O.B: How did the group actually come together?

G.P: We all met at a Record Convention. And since all of us were into the early Stones, circa '64/'65 we decided that was where we wanted to go.

B.O.B: As soon as you started to release records you had a solid cult following. Before you got international attention, what was the reaction to The Kings in Rochester?

G.P: I guess it was favourable. I don't know if people understood us, but they seemed to like us.

B.O.B: I've heard that since you've become known, Ori's been mobbed by teenage girls on the streets of Rochester. Does this happen a lot?

G.P: Yeah!

B.O.B: In New York, The Chesterfield Kings are regarded as Gods, what other cities have you played?

G.P: Gods? Crazy. We've played in Boston, Syracuse, New Jersey, Baltimore, Virginia, Washington D.C., etc. Basically East Coast cities.

B.O.B: Any favorite places?

G.P: I especially dig New York and Boston. We like Maxwell's in Hoboken, N.J. a lot.

B.O.B: Last year when I was visiting California, I was often asked what The Kings were like in concert. Obviously, there's a following there. Are you planning a West Coast, or for that matter a trip to Europe?

G.P: Hopefully, when we get our next album out. We hope and plan to go to Europe and play in the midwest and West Coast in the States. We're keeping our fingers crossed.

B.O.B: You're getting booked on a lot of "garage/psychedelic" shows, are there any new bands that knock you out?

G.P: I enjoy The Lyres and The Unclaimed.

B.O.B: Does the group enjoy recording?

G.P: Yeah, it's a real blast.

B.O.B: What type of studio did you use for your records?

G.P: We used the Church basement at Andy's church and at least 11 or 12 other local studios. Next album will be all done at one location.

B.O.B: Were you satisfied with the way it turned out?

G.P: It was good for its time, I guess. I like most of it. It's a bit tinny.

B.O.B: You described The Chesterfield Kings' sound in *Stop!* as being teenage, yet, for the most part, you play clubs where teens aren't allowed. Have the Kings ever played High School dances or teen clubs?

G.P: No. But we're playing at a teen dance at a girls catholic high school in January. Should be real crazy.

B.O.B: I'm sure a million or so teens saw the King's on MTV recently. Your video is incredible. Was it fun to make? Did you have any say in its direction?

G.P: I guess it was fun to make, although it was more work than we thought. Yes, we had a lot to say in its direction. It was directed by Armand Schaubroeck. He understands where we're at and after watching the T.A.M.I. Show and assorted Shindig and Hullabaloo Shows, he

knew what had to be done.

B.O.B: Will you be recording a second album soon?

G.P: The second album is in the works now. It'll be produced right this time. There will be a few little differences. Still the same trashy group though. There'll be a mix of primitive punkers and folk-rock. We're including five or six originals this time, too. No drastic changes.

B.O.B: What actual models of instruments does everyone play?

G.P: Andy plays a '64 Hofner, also a '66 Hofner and a '66 Vox. Ori, he's got two Vox organs, a continental and a super continental, which was originally used by Peter Tork on the Monkees Show and two Farfisas. Rick usually uses Rickenbackers - most of the time his Marble top one. Ori also plays Rickenbackers. Usually his '65 12 string. That's what the guys usually use. They've got a lot of other stuff, but it's too numerous and boring to list.

B.O.B: Do you play anything other than harmonica?

G.P: Maraccas, saw and ape sounds! I smash mike stands, too.

B.O.B: I know you're a big folk-rock fan, will you be experimenting more in that style - or will you continue with your more gritty sound?

G.P: We dig folk-rock as much as primitive punk sounds. Like on our first album there were a couple of folk-rockers. There will be more on the next as well. It'll be a good mix, or should I say, a good balance.

B.O.B: You're still active as a writer/publisher, working hard to track down primo rockers from the sixties. Who are some of those you've interviewed or met?

G.P: Barry Tashian from The Remains. Bob Newton of The Fantastic DeeJays/Swamprats, Chris Hillman of The Byrds, Ray Davies of The Kinks, etc. I had a blast interviewing Chris Hillman and Ray Davies. Really great guys. All the guys I've talked to are real cool. Only a few negative reactions to what I was doing. The guitar player from the Young Tyrants was pretty impossible, not to mention, embarrassed about his group. Crazy. I guess that was the worst. The lead singer from The Tyrants, on the other hand, was really cool and we listened to 45's while the interview was conducted.

B.O.B: Do you enjoy anything recent by The Stones, Kinks, McGuinn, etc?

G.P: I prefer the pre '67 era of all the groups mentioned, although I still respect them for going on in music for so many years.

B.O.B: Have any of your influences seen the Kings perform?

G.P: Yes. Members of The Heard, Humans and Blues Magoos have been in audiences we've played for.

B.O.B: Are you going to continue publishing your excellent fanzine *Outasite?* It's a fun mag and I hope you'll continue.

G.P: ~~It~~ is planned. I just have to find time to put it together. I will always try to put it out whenever I get the proper time to dedicate to it.

B.O.B: I guess finding time would be a problem. What other interests do you have other than music?

G.P: Golf, pinball, Donkey Kong, comic books, and T.V. Not to forget girls!

B.O.B: You were going to set up a Chocolate Watchband fan club, what happened?

G.P: It fell through due to lack of members and lack of cooperation from assorted members of the Watchband.

B.O.B: Briefly describe what the guys in the Kings are like?

G.P: Andy - funny, creative, organized, goofy!
Ori - quiet, moody, into blues, crazy!
Rick - a very funny guy. Nuts!
Doug - quiet, into sports, also crazy.
I guess we're all trying to be Shemp!

B.O.B: Here's a silly question. List your all-time fave 45's and albums and what you like about

them. Keep it to five, though.

G.P.: 45's. Rolling Stones': 19th Nervous Breakdown. Just great. Classic. Electric Prunes': Too Much To Dream. Good gimmicks, and snotty vocals. Swamprats': Psycho. Insane. Outsiders (Dutch group): Filthy Rich. Great rhythm. ROKS': Transparent Day. Great folk-rock version of West Coast Pop Art Experimental Band song. ALBUMS. Dylan's *Highway 61*. At least eight times a day! Rolling Stones' first ten albums. My faves. Byrds': *Mr Tambourine Man*. Fave folk-rock album. Beatles': *Help*. The English version. Ace. Outsiders (Dutch group): First album. Insane and great. Also the first and second Pretty Things albums.

B.O.B.: Knowing the current bland state of R&R, how far do you think The Chesterfield Kings can go?

G.P.: I guess we'll go as far as we can. Nowadays anything goes, so who knows? Personally, I hope we can go all the way, but live for the moment and don't worry about what may or may not happen.

B.O.B.: With all the publicity the group has gotten,

have any major labels approached The Chesterfield Kings?

G.P.: A few, so far.

B.O.B.: The group knows over 150 songs, how do you decide what to play?

G.P.: Well, we now have 400 songs! Everyone will name their fave raves. Then we take votes each time we're about to choose a song.

Maybe those who have negative feelings about The Chesterfield Kings really believe this group to be nothing more than just a forced flashback to 1966, but those who've witnessed The Kings in action know better. These five guys have plenty of personality, they look great and sound even better. They perform music they truly love and they do so with such class and style they sound a lot more fresh and contemporary than, let's say Culture Club or The Human League. The Chesterfield Kings are one boss group that I know you'll dig once they arrive in England. Just be prepared to dance to those fuzzed out, nuggets.

Charles P. Lamey

THE PLAYN JAYN

RED WITH PURPLE FLASHES

The Playn Jayn are a splash of true colour on a currently very dismal London club and pub circuit. I've seen them constantly lumped in with the garage/trash bands like the Milkshakes, Sting-rays et al, though in reality they're very much out on their own, visually and stylistically a very arresting unit. Based in West Kensington, the group Craig Lindsay, Mike Jones (lead vocals), Erol Sulyeman (bass), Clive Frances (drums) and Nick Jones (lead guitar) have been around for quite a while now, their roots going back to an outfit known as The Zoo who gigged regularly at places such as the Rock Garden and the Ad Lib.

Changing to the Playn Jayn, they made something of a reputation for themselves at the trendy Soho Club 'Le Beatroute'. Nick Jones takes up the story: "Erol our bass player was working at the Beatroute and asked if the band could play a gig, a lot of people turned up and it worked out so well, we played there again the next month". They further bolstered their reputation in the closing months of last year with support slots on tours with the Fleshtones, the Alarm and Dr. Feelgood. As Nick remarks: "In 1983 we became a good band in terms of playing live, our musicianship and stage presentation became tighter".

The band have a great mid-sixties feel to them, both in the way they look and the sounds they make but Nick is quick to point out that "the sixties thing shouldn't be over emphasized - we listen to that stuff but there are a lot of other people we also listen to". Without doubt, though, immediate comparisons with bands like the Creation, the Nashville Teens and the Shotgun Express spring to mind - Craig and Mike are one of the best double vocal acts since Group Therapy (remember them?), they look good in their Swinging London stage gear and generate rushes of excitement, successfully avoiding the wimpiness of just about all the current vocalists (Boy George and co.) and also any overt macho posturings, preferring to pour out all their feelings in emotional attack. Erol and Clive provide a "meat and potatoes" rhythm section which leaves Nick Jones free to play the most original, colourful and mean guitar since Hitchcock and Rew dissolved their partnership. It's always surprised me that more young musicians with sixties inclinations haven't mined that rich U.K. pop period (1966-1968), something that the Playn Jayn unconsciously do, their material often setting off associations with a hundred bands, all but forgotten until the Chocolate Soup For Diabetics LP series set things to



rights. Nick Jones was surprised when I mentioned this to him: "I never thought of us as being English: I'd say that the Prisoners have more of a Who sound, they're more like the Creation". The outfit also at times comes over with a white mid sixties Tamla Motown ring to it and it's been rumoured that the mighty Detroit record label is interested in putting them into the studio to cut some demos.

Along with debut albums from Clay Allison and the United States of Existence, I'm impatiently looking forward to the Playn Jayn LP as one of the high-lights of 1984. In view of the time they've been going, I'm surprised that there has been such a lack of a record company contract. Nick Jones: "There's no particular reason, just an undisciplined attitude on our part". The material in their live set is strong and varied from dance numbers like "Juliet" to mynd frazzlers such as "Why Are Your Kind So Blind" which Nick describes as "our Chocolate Watchband song", or "You Weren't Born, You Were Created", about which he comments "Our Seeds song - I can imagine them doing that". Other highlights include "Crystal Ball", a sort of frustration song and "I Love You Like I Love Myself" which explores a theme of vanity.

It won't be long before some sharp A&R man snaps them up: Richard Mazda of Fleshtones fame has shown interest in producing and the group are back out on the road at this very minute playing select dates with the Cramps. So long as their songs don't change too radically in the studio (I feel a degree of restraint is in order: no over the top production), their debut record could be a cracker: whatever the Playn Jayn are a band to watch out for.

Nigel

GROOVIN' ON A SUNDAY AFTERNOON WITH CHRIS WILSON

O.K. gang, here it is, after a lot of empty promises, the Chris Wilson interview; I was beginning to have nightmares that we'd never ever get it into print! Your thanks should go to Jon Storey who operates a clearing house for Groovies related info and tapes, and to Chris himself who valiantly climbed out of his sick bed to undergo all the questions that Jon and I had up our sleeves. Incidentally Jon transcribed the entire conversation! The interview took place at Chris's house, late afternoon Sunday 11th December 1983.

B.O.B: Let's start right at the beginning with Prince and The Paupers, what can you remember about them?

C.W: Actually I don't even remember the names of two of the guys in the band. There was myself, Chris Cunningham who was more or less the Prince, anyway he was the richest man in the band; Dennis Corso and Tony somebody; the other two geezers I don't remember. We never really hung out or anything, except at gigs, because we were a professional type tour band, we all had our own friends.

B.O.B: Like a Paul Revere And The Raiders thing?

C.W: Yeah. We didn't wear costumes or anything like that but we used to dress quite foppishly - ruffled shirts and all that shit. We used to play around high schools and dance clubs that became popular in the North Shore of Massachusetts in '68. We did a mixture of originals and stuff that was popular at the time: Animals and Stones.

B.O.B: What was your role in the band?

C.W: I was playing guitar and singing with Dennis and Chris, we had three guitars, keyboards, bass and drums, Oh, that's right - there were six of us. We got really popular around Boston and did a brief tour of Connecticut, New York and Philadelphia. I remember we played Atlantic City for around three days in some big hotel. We never made any recordings - which is a shame - after I left they did something for White Whale which is extremely hard to find.

B.O.B: What were they called then?

C.W: Still Prince And The Paupers. They did some demos for them, there were some acetates hanging around. I noticed on this album that they had in Vinyl Solution, a Boston sound album, which had Teddy and the Pandas and Beacon Street Union and really obscure Boston bands who were actually a lot more popular than we were and actually got signed to deals. Anyway this album actually mentions Prince And The Paupers. No shit! That was the first time I'd ever seen any mention of them anywhere. That was about early '69. Then Dennis and Chris left and we formed another brief band called The Gridleys, me, Dennis and Chris. It was great because we had this dj on WMEX in Boston who was trying to promote us, his name was Ron Robin, and he would keep mentioning the name all the time like "It's a Gridley day today" or "I'm feeling Gridley", stuff like that.

B.O.B: Why were you called The Gridleys?

C.W: I don't know. Its just some name that Chris thought up, he thought it was catchy!! I thought it was kinda stupid myself. So we went on like that just playing little clubs - we did the Boston Tea Party a couple of times.

B.O.B: Was this the same type of material, as Prince

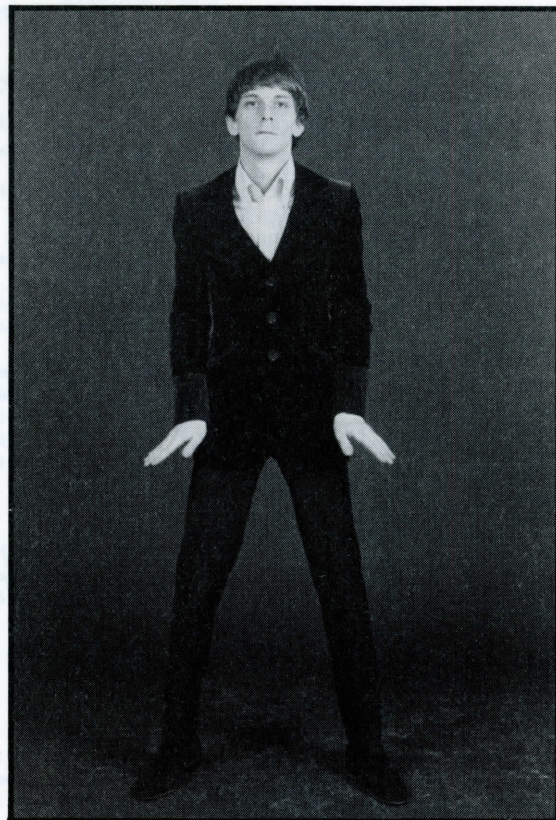


Photo courtesy of Tom Sheehan

and The Paupers, or had you changed quite a lot in style?

C.W: It was just originals then.

B.O.B: It was very much 'period' or

C.W: Well, more like psychedelic in a way. (Sings) "Its raining outside, I have to run and hide, from the tears that I cry" with sort of fuzz-tone guitar and stuff. We were all writing songs but we weren't getting anywhere. Then Dennis and Chris said that they were leaving about late 1970 and moved to L.A. I stayed on in Boston, just hung around a bit, played with a few people, jammed in the local clubs, jammed around Club 47 with some friends. A friend of mine had a band called 'The Bruised Fruit' and I used to play with them a lot; just rhythm 'n' blues type stuff. Towards the beginning of '71 I got really fed up and decided to join these guys in L.A. So one freezing cold morning I just packed all my stuff together and got together about 200 Dollars and got a ticket.

B.O.B: You were still living at home at that time?

C.W: Yeah, on and off, between going to friends' crash-pads and Beacon Hill. I arrived in L.A. in January '71, I wanted to surprise these guys so I didn't tell them I was coming and I phoned them from the Airport and said "Here I am you guys, I'm in L.A." and they went "Oh, er great well we'll see if we can work something out". They weren't doing too well, they were crashing with these chicks in Laurel Canyon and they made it known right away that I was going to be something of a burden and they said "Well look, we'll take you to see our producer who is just taking us into the studio and we'll see if we can work something out". They'd cut some stuff in the studio with this guy who had

paid for the studio time. They took me to this place in Laurel Canyon and he turned out to be a raving fruit. After seeing the guy, on the way out, he sorta grabbed my ass and said "I'm sure we can find something for you". Chris Cunningham said "You don't get anywhere down here unless you, uh, put out" so I just went "Hey, well, I'm afraid that's not my scene" and I spent about two weeks down there completely penniless: living off people's fruit trees. Its true!! I didn't know what was going on and this friend of mine, who was in another band, who was going to be in the Gridleys, told me that whole thing; kinda freaked me out. Anyway he heard I was in L.A. and got in touch with these guys and told them to tell me to give him a call. So I phoned him up, in San Francisco, and he said that this other friend of ours, from Boston, Kenny Streight, was in a band with Mike Wilhelm (Loose Gravel) and they were looking for a lead singer and that I should come up. I said that I would love to but I was just planning to go back to Boston because I had no money and no way to get about. He said "Don't worry about it - get to the Airport and there'll be a ticket waiting for you". So I did. Then, I remember, that night he picked me up at San Francisco Airport and we went to the Fillmore, took some acid, and saw Chicken Shack, or something like that. I met the first black chick I'd ever gone home with - that was pretty interesting!! So I thought, well, this is alright. The next day I had a meeting with Michael (Wilhelm) and he gave me a sort of audition - playing some sort of blues - then he showed me his originals. Another guy in Loose Gravel at that time was Rick Kunstler, who had been in a group called 'Group Image' who were a progressive/psychedelic band from New York. He was kinda 'hippied out' unfortunately. He wrote a lot of the songs with Wilhelm like "Waiting In Line" and stuff on the "Wilhelm" album. He left a couple of months later and Wilhelm wanted to keep a three guitar line-up; so I phoned Dennis Corso who was the only other guy I could think of who could sing pretty well and might be into doing it. He was in Boston then - he'd left L.A. because things there fell apart. He came back and did some sessions for Richard Olsen, some of the other stuff on the "Wilhelm" album like "Junko Partner". We weren't getting a lot of work around San Francisco because Bill Graham hated Wilhelm at the time.

B.O.B: That would explain the film ("The Fillmore Rock Festival").

C.W: That was funny because they cut a lot of it out. Wilhelm was really pleading with him. They made him look like an asshole in that clip. He didn't just say "Fuck you" what he said was "Fuck you and thanks for the memories". Bill Graham chased him down the stairs. So that really chewed it for us - after that we were done, couldn't get any work.

B.O.B: What was San Francisco like at that time?

C.W: It was pretty dead. I used to walk down Haight Street with Wilhelm and Phil and one of the only shops open was the fish and chip shop down near Golden Gate Park. The rest of Haight Street was completely boarded up and they had these fucking searchlights and patrols of six cops each going up both sides of the street - just stopping anybody. It went on like that for a couple of years. Anyway towards the Autumn of 1971 I was getting really fed up, absolutely no money. Dennis and Kenny Streight started shootin' up again and getting weird, getting the cops around the house and stuff, so I told Michael I couldn't do it anymore. We had met the Groovies, well Wilhelm was quite friendly with them, I didn't know them that well. They used to come to our gigs, Cyril and George and James. They heard I was going back to Boston so one night Cyril, George and Danny came over and said "Well look man, everybody in the Groovies is fed up with Roy and we're thinking of dropping him if you'd step in". I quite liked their

music so I figured, what the fuck, Wilhelm won't miss me too badly - he did actually - that was the first time I'd ever seen him cry.

B.O.B: So James Ferrell was already in the Groovies when you joined?

C.W: Yeah, James had come in just after they recorded 'Teenage Head' because Tim Lynch had been busted by a nark in San Francisco - he sold him an ounce of heroin. This guy had been hanging out with him for weeks and weeks, buying his kid toys and shit like that and basically set him up. That was a lot of heroin at that time.

B.O.B: So Tim Lynch isn't on the Fillmore album ('Slow Death - Live' on Lolita)?

C.W: No, it was James. Tim was in jail at that time.

B.O.B: At this time there was talk of a band that Cyril and Wilhelm were going to start called The Dogs?

C.W: No, no that wasn't that. After I'd been in the Groovies for a couple of months we were having the same problem with Bill Graham and promoters in general and it was really hard for us to get work. So one day we were sitting around getting stoned and (saying) "Well, this is bullshit, we're treated like dogs, we may as well call ourselves The Dogs" - so we did. We found that promoters really didn't know who the Dogs were or give a shit. There was a place called the Longbranch Saloon, it was quite a popular club, and we played there a few times when we were the Dogs. John Wasserman, who was a critic for the San Francisco Chronicle, quite liked us. He came to one gig and said "Hey look you guys, you're getting nowhere with this name, change your name back to the Groovies and I'll do what I can for you". He spoke to a few promoters who he was friendly with and we started getting a lot more work. He kept mentioning us in his column. There was a great clipping I used to have that said "Flamin' to Dogs and back to Flamin'", and he called us "Lovable Rover Boys Of Rock". He was a really nice guy and its a shame that he died in a drunken car accident. So we went on like that for a while playing around 'Frisco and in L.A. we did a massive gig at the Whisky A Go Go with Screaming Lord Sutch - it was one of the high points of my career in those early days - onstage with Screaming Lord Sutch and MC'd by Kim Fowley. Fowley had this idea for a dance contest and the prize was a hundred dollars. It was really funny, we were doing these old rock 'n' roll tunes with Sutch.... "Oh Baby, Whole Lotta Freakin' Goin' On" they took real licence with the lyrics to a lot of those songs. God knows what we looked like on stage.

B.O.B: So you were backing Sutch were you?

C.W: Yeah, for these two nights at the Whisky, on top of opening the show. That was the beginning of our association with Kim Fowley - who went on sending us songs. I had some great acetates, I gave some to Marc Zermati which he later put out. Great songs like "Born Without A Tail" and "No Transportation". One of them was called "Wild Wild Party" - the acetate was great - it was just Mars Bonfire playing guitar and Kim Fowley singing (Sings): "The place was rockin' bout half past eight, the sounds were red hot, cool and great, all of a sudden a knock hit the door, a dog came in and shit on the floor, it was a wild wild party". We thought it was a joke but he was serious - he seriously expected we'd jump at the chance. While we were down in L.A. we heard from some friends that Andrew Lauder, who was head of A & R for UA in England, really wanted us on U.A. and wanted to do some new stuff. We had a demo that we made in Danny's living room which was not the best quality but still fairly good songs. Its on that Skydog stuff: 'Grease' and 'More Grease'. We took it to Marty Surf down in L.A. who was the head of A & R for

U.A. in Hollywood. He was not impressed - he thought it was too vague. We went home pretty despondent and called Andrew Lauder and said that the guy didn't like the songs so that was pretty much it; and he said "Well no, because I've been talking to some people here and everybody thinks that you'd go down really well here - so we're bringing you over". It took about six months for them to actually get it together. Finally we forced his hand and said "We've bought the tickets - you've got to pay for them, for our road manager, John Seaton and for Cyril to come over". So Cyril went there for about a month just trying to get it together. Finally they went and did it and somehow got it out of them - got the airline tickets for the rest of us and we went over.

B.O.B: Can you remember what day you actually arrived in England?

C.W: It was about April 15th. I remember because there was a great headline "Loch Ness Monster Found" on April 1st 1972 in the San Francisco Chronicle, which was a story from England.

B.O.B: How come you got to live in Chingford?

C.W: Well, they looked all over for a place for us and it wasn't easy to find. They had got us this place 60 miles north of London called Hyde Hall. It was beautiful: like a moated manor house and we had to say no because it was too far away from London where we had so much business to do all the time, so we couldn't afford to keep driving back and forth. Finally they found us this house in Chingford. They had kept us in a four star hotel in St John's Wood, called The Clive on Primrose Hill Road and we ran up a three thousand quid bill - they went totally ape shit!! We didn't have any friends so we just sat in our rooms drinking Champagne every day. We didn't know we were being extravagant. Anyhow our relationship with the record company started to deteriorate rapidly.

B.O.B: So they put you into the studio

C.W: Yeah, we went to Rockfield; that's a funny story too. We went to U.A. and talked to Andrew Lauder about the sessions and we said that we wanted to use Rockfield because Cyril and I were quite into Dave Edmunds, we all were. He said "OK, no problem, we use Rockfield all the time" and we said we wanted Dave as producer and he said "Yeah, no problem, we'll get in touch with them". About a week later we were on our way to Rockfield. The day before Dave had come into the studio with Kingsley (Ward) because they get all the music papers and stuff delivered once a week down there - to read up on what's going on. Dave's looking through the who's to who and where and says "Look Kingsley, the Flamin' Groovies are coming". Dave remembered the Groovies from some gigs Love Sculpture did with them in the Mid West. "It says here they're coming here tomorrow - produced by Dave Edmunds" and nobody had been in touch with them, nobody had asked them anything, they hadn't even got in contact with them. He never told me that until he came to San Francisco in 1978 and we were having a natter backstage. He just dove right in and got all the legal shit sorted out later.

B.O.B: So that's where you formed a good friendship?

C.W: Yeah, it was. We went back to Rockfield - we were only there twice. We did 'Shake Some Action', 'You Tore Me Down', 'Little Queenie', 'Get A Shot Of Rhythm 'n' Blues' and 'Married Woman'.

B.O.B: And 'Talahassie Lassie'?

C.W: No, 'Talahassie Lassie' we did ourselves at Advision. We produced it ourselves because Dave was doing something and couldn't make the session - so we couldn't get Rockfield so we just thought fuck it and got the best place we could find. We did it really fast - in about 12 hours - Nick Kent was there - this

is where the great Nick Kent controversy came about. Kris Needs interviewed him (in Zigzag) and he said that he played guitar on 'Slow Death' which was a lie. He never even came to Rockfield I don't think. He was at Advision when we did 'Talahassie Lassie' with these two chicks from Detroit - they did help with the handclaps.

B.O.B: So Nick Kent played on 'Talahassie Lassie'?

C.W: Yes, he did do the handclaps on it - I'll give him that.

B.O.B: These sessions at Rockfield - were these going to be the basis for this supposed album 'Bucketful of Brains'?

C.W: Yes, and it wasn't 'BUCKETFUL of Brains'. I was reminded of this just the other day. There's a pub in Wigmore Street where I saw they had Brains Beer. Brains is a Welsh beer, it comes from down around Cardiff, we were quite fond of it. Actually it was John Seaton who made the name up: we were sat down in a pub after we'd been on the road all day and somebody buying the drinks said "What do you want, John" and he said "I'll have a Bucket Of Brains". That's where it came from - it was a 'Bucket Of Brains' that's what it was going to be. Of course we never got to realise the whole album. We went the whole of that summer without hardly playing at all, just sitting in this big house in Chingford, smoking up our salaries. We would come into London, buy a load of Hash and go back. I used to sit in the back (of the house) and shoot pigeons, with my air-rifle, off peoples roofs - just pretty much made a nuisance of ourselves.

B.O.B: Didn't you play with Man about that time?

C.W: Yes, we did. That was right after the summer time. We got in this agency with this guy named Roy Fisher - really straight sort of guy, late thirties, he had really long hair but it looked a really straight sort of haircut that he just let the sides grow. He was just the funniest looking geezer and his partner was Joe Cruickshank, who's the brother of the bass player of the Groundhogs, who were quite popular at that time. They got us a bunch of gigs around England and we went off with Man and the funniest fuckin' group you've ever seen in your life, I've never met anyone who ever heard of them or remembered them: Mr Moses Schoolband. This guy was so hysterical - he was an ex British Army physical education instructor - he had really long hair and a big beard, his band were a big bunch of hippies. He used to do songs that were so obscene - they were gonna get the cops in at Chatham Town Hall!! He'd come out with this crucifix hanging down in front of his balls and a British Army bandsman's jacket with green armpits. He'd come onstage and start throwing humps at the audience. We would just fall all over - completely creased up. They were really funny, he was really out of his mind. Anyway he was dropped from the tour and we did the rest of it with just Man. Then somebody got us this tour of France in November of '72, I don't remember who it was or how it got together, that was when we met Marc Zermati and the Skydog people We played this circus tent that was like the biggest cross-section of people that I've ever seen: guys that looked like stockbrokers; about a thousand kids; a whole bunch of gypsies - I remember watching this old gypsy woman smoking a pipe and rocking back and forth with a smile on her face and (thinking) this is really peculiar. This was about 20 miles or so from Paris - it's a big amusement park, it was great, we played off two flat bed trucks together. There are some pictures around, the cover of 'Little Queenie' was taken there.

B.O.B: Yeah, you can see the stripes of the tent over the top.

C.W: That's it. It was really good - we drove for two weeks all over the country - it became like a legendary thing.



Avast there ye land lubbers! The Groovies in Chingford: l-r Danny, Chris, James, Cyril, George.

B.O.B: Weren't you on French TV then?

C.W: Yes, we were. We did a 'Rockin' Stock' (?) which was sort of Rock 'n' Folk TV show that they sponsored, it was like a 45 minute show of us live in the studio. I've always wanted to see that 'cos I'm sure it must have been quite cool, we were all on the floor with cameras and lights all around us and an audience of about 150 people. The only other thing we did film-wise back then, well they did do a film of the Bickershaw Festival, was a film of 'Slow Death' for Australian television, or something like that, at the Marquee. I remember we were in there for 16 hours filming - amazing!!

B.O.B: Was 'Slow Death' big in Australia?

C.W: No, I don't think so - I've asked Australian friends if they've ever seen it and they said no, so I don't know what happened to that. So around November (1972) when we got back from France it was quite obvious the record company were planning on giving us the axe, which we figured was alright: we'd been here for a year, they'd spent over 100,000 quid on us and they didn't have a signed contract. We never signed a piece of paper - so consequently they had no right to put out any records once we had left. They sort of engineered us going home for Christmas and said come back after the New Year. Sure, we knew then that it was all over. I remember Nick Garvey crying, he was our roadie. Anyhow we went back and there was really fuck all happening in the States and we finally got the official word from the record company who weren't interested. We started looking round for another label. We'd been back about a month and Danny had gotten really fed up with the band, well actually he got really fed up with Cyril.

They'd always kinda hated each other (that's why I was so surprised when I heard he was touring with them in '82), so anyway he got the boot. We got together and said this was it for Danny. James wasn't too happy about it but we all out voted him and said "you can either go with him or stay with us". So James being the opportunist he was said OK. It was really bad I couldn't even say Hi to Danny if I saw him on the street. So we were putting our heads together and trying to think of some new songs, we went down to L.A. again and this girl who was our biggest fan, a chick named Michelle Myer, who had lived in Hollywood since '70 and knew everybody - she was really good friends with Brian Wilson and all the Beach Boys. She found us this guy, through her room-mate, who was her ex boy-friend, Terry Rae. We had a meeting with him, he was quite a good looking fella, and we figured alright, lets see if he can play drums. We had him audition, he played quite well, then we made contact with this guy called Ken Sasano (?) who was an A & R guy for Capitol who quite liked the U.A. stuff that he'd heard. He brought us down to Capitol to do a re-done version of 'Shake Some Action' and this new song we'd written 'When I Heard Your Name'. It was a nice session down at Capitol, staying at a nice place. I think they came out really well. 'When I Heard Your Name' I thought should have been a single. A couple of weeks later just when he was getting the ball rolling a new Vice-President came into his department and sacked everybody under him, including Ken, and replaced them all with other people. The whole project, on which they'd spent several thousand dollars, just got shelved - forgotten about until '76 when

we were doing the 'Now' album and I mentioned to Seymour (Stein) that the stuff was still down there and that he should get hold of it. So that was a blow. There wasn't that much happening for the next year or so - we didn't play at all. Terry was still in the band. We only met every once in a while. I think we played a couple of gigs in the San Francisco area but not much was happening. 1974 was a write-off. Early in 1975 Cyril and a guy who was helping us out at the time, Jeff Richardson, went to Holland, because Pieter Meulenbroeks, who was one of the partners in Skydog, had found a couple of people who were interested in signing us. They were there for about a month - it was all bullshit really - the guy really didn't like us all that much and didn't want to sign us at all. He just heard the records and thought they were good or something. In the meantime, a couple of weeks before they got back, Kim Fowley gave me a call and said "I hear your drummer is down here working in a shoe shop and I can get him some session work and make him some money, why don't you give me his address and telephone number, I'll get in touch with him and at least that way keep him playing". In reality what he did - he called up and dangled some thirty grand promise if he joined the Hollywood Stars, which Terry went and did. A couple of weeks later, after Cyril got back, he said "I'm taking Kim's Offer. As it turned out he really got ripped off. The last time I saw him, when we played the Whisky in '79, he was the doorman!! Around that time Greg Shaw became interested in us and took us into His Masters Wheels studio in San Francisco; which used to be PHR where we did all the 'Wilhelm' album stuff.

B.O.B: Richard Olsen was still there was he?

C.W: No, he wasn't. He'd split from that, I think he was in a Powell Street jazz band at that time, playing Union Square tap dancing. So we went in there and cut 'Him Or Me'. Which is, I think, one of the worse things we ever recorded soundwise and quality-wise, it was weak. We were just doing it for the B side of 'You Tore Me Down' anyway, which he wanted for Bomp. Through that Seymour Stein became interested in us.

B.O.B: Was it around this time that there was a conscious effort to move away from the earlier Groovies sound?

C.W: Yes, there was. We wanted to get more 'poppy'. I was writing more myself then. So we figured lets try to change our image a bit here. We had this great master-plan which took a little while to get going. We did get an advance finally from Sire and stipulated in our contract that we had to record at Rockfield; they had to get Edmunds to produce us - which they actually went out and did - which blew our minds. They gave us a really horrible advance, something like 5,000 dollars, which was actually a lot of money, we got seven Dual Showmans and a couple of guitars and got ready to go on the road. A couple of months later we came over to England and went to Rockfield and started recording 'Shake Some Action'.

B.O.B: It was around this time that all those photographs started appearing with you and Cyril in smart Saville Row suits and things.

C.W: That's right. Pieter Meulenbroeks introduced us to the guy who was the Beatles and Stones tailor. He made us all these clothes including that big green coat, all my velvet jackets. He became our tailor - we had several good trips there, spent lots of money and got lots of good looking duds. We didn't play too much here in '75. We went back to San Francisco and the album ('Shake Some Action') was released. At that time I was under Martial Law because they tried to draft me in 1972; I wasn't in the country I was in England. We came back and James Ferrell and I were both arrested by The F.B.I. They got

him at O'Hara Airport in Chicago but they let him go because it was Christmas and they didn't want to send him to Cook County Jail. He got out of it a little while later but I had hell to pay getting out of it. Ford had granted a conditional amnesty where you had to work a public service job 40 hours a week which precluded me going on the road. I worked for the Haight Ashbury Free Clinic - they were sort of counter-culture people - they lied for me when I had to go on the road. Actually I have telegrams from the American Civil Liberties Union who were also trying to get me off this when I was at Rockfield, they had heard that I wasn't in the country and were trying to put forward my indictment, which went on for another two years; they were just on my ass. The U.S. attorney in Boston wanted to have me prosecuted, which was really rough. I finally got out of it when Carter was elected. So anyway we came back in '75 and there wasn't much happening in the States. We played a couple of gigs in the Mid West or somewhere, nothing remarkable. Came back (to England) in '76 for that Roundhouse show with the Ramones, because Seymour wanted them to get seen in London and he figured - put them on the same show with the Groovies. They were quite funny actually: I remember us all going out in London and the Ramones were all standing under a street light going "Hey, you guys, where you going, where can you go in this town? Will they beat you up?" and stuff like that. Unfortunately for us Sire saw much more potential in them because the punk thing had started happening in London. They sort of forgot about us. Somehow we got them to spring for the 'Now' album, thats my favourite record of the Groovies because everything was working really well.

B.O.B: So when did you record 'Now'?

C.W: That was in about October '77. Dave Edmunds had some gigs or something he had to do so we didn't get back to it again until January.

B.O.B: This was a lot later, when James Ferrell had already left?

C.W: Yes, James Ferrell had left because he had got married in the interim, early 1976. He'd just totally forgotten about the band and his playing was getting worse and worse, he was getting louder and playing raunchier. So we finally asked him to leave. We were trying to think of who we could get in the band: another guitar player. We came up with the idea of getting Michael (Wilhelm) because it was one way of paying him back for all the heartbreak we caused him by me leaving. He was quite funny about it at first: "Oh man, I got my own trip, Y'know and I'll keep goin' with that" and we said "You're doing fuck all here, you can't get any decent gigs, the other guys in your band will understand, you're getting on in years - you're no spring chicken and the time has come for you to move on". Finally he said "How many people come to your gigs? A couple of thousand.... Hmm - Get me a suit!!".

B.O.B: Did you make him shave his beard off?

C.W: He didn't have one at the time.

B.O.B: Was Wilhelm solo then or still with the three piece Loose Gravel?

C.W: Loose Gravel were still playing as a three piece then, but they weren't doing too well.

B.O.B: Did you take it into consideration that the 'Wilhelm' album had just been released over here at that time?

C.W: I don't think that we even knew that until we came over in fact. Wilhelm was quite surprised and went to see Andrew Lauder and said "Hey, I want some money, man, I'm a musician, man, and you didn't even ask me", but he was quite happy.

B.O.B: I saw your second date on that tour.

C.W: At Eric's.

B.O.B: Yeah, with a 20 minute Wilhelm solo set!!

C.W: That was really bad because we were all sick,

I was sick as a dog, I couldn't even sing.

B.O.B: So Wilhelm led the band and sang some solo stuff as well, which all the punks hated. It was great. I believe you had some trouble with the Damned on that tour as well?

C.W: Yeah, well they were just the wrong support act. The only one of the bunch who was quite sensible was Sensible. After they said something in the press about us being a bunch of has beens we dropped them. Really to us they were nothing, just punks. I couldn't imagine how big they would be later on, because I just thought what's this load of shit. That was the beginning of my disillusionment with the whole business, I was just ready to quit, because I was fed up with the way it was going. We went back, to the States, around January or February 1977. Another unremarkable period - nothing much really going on. Towards May (1978) we came back to do a tour of England and we understood we would be recording an album at the end of it. We were here for about three months and did this tour. We did one gig in Paris and drove to Belgium and on the way to the gig, in Brussels, Cyril was being incredibly negative about the whole thing. He had this amazing ability to draw horrible things to happen to him by imagining them happening. The rest of us were quite easy going. We would put up with shit and just bite our tongues. So the first thing that happened was he walked into the gig and slipped on cobblestones and broke a bottle in his hand and cut the tendons in his right hand, his little finger. That was it for a while because it didn't look like he was going to have the use of his hand back for a while. Everything had to be postponed for a couple of weeks. Our roadie got him a Harley Street specialist to try and get him together within two weeks, which he amazingly did. Cyril was playing with a big cast on, which was quite funny. It was super-human on his part, getting it down to how to play with two pounds of plaster on his hand. That was the beginning of the end. Everybody was getting fed up with each other and with Cyril. I was getting fed up with Cyril because I was living with him and familiarity breeds contempt as they say. When we finally finished the English tour we were on our way back to London when we got the news that we weren't going to do the album - that we were just going back (to the States). We got back to London and we all got together and said we're not going to put up with this, let's start approaching other labels, which we did, Radar being one. Andrew Lauder was interested. Finally the head of Warner Brothers at the time, phoned Seymour Stein and said "I want you to go ahead with the Groovies because if you don't want to know then put them on Radar or one of our subsidiaries because I want the record out". God knows why. It was a real drag. Sire put us in this horrible hotel in London because they thought that we were going back. I lost all my suits, all my stage clothes were nicked out of my hotel, which was a blow - it was a big steamer-trunk full of clothes, all custom made. Then the next nasty blow: we got into the studio and Edmunds came for the first night and then never came back. So we went ahead and produced it ourselves. It wasn't as good as 'Now' or 'Shake Some Action'.

B.O.B: There's a lot of covers on it.

C.W: Yeah. This was the thing, I was starting to get really fed up.

B.O.B: Every interview they were tackling Cyril about doing more and more cover versions.

C.W: It was this mental block he had about doing our own stuff - that I just couldn't understand, because I had loads of good songs and he had lots of good ideas too. He just said why should we give it away - there's nothing going to happen with it - he didn't want to give Sire fifty per cent of our publishing. At the same time I don't think he realised that we were alienating a lot of people that

liked us, by doing that. I was all for doing the old stuff as well, like 'Slow Death', I didn't mind doing stuff for people that wanted to hear it; but he was totally against it. So we went back to the States after 'Jumpin' In The Night'. I brought Korin back with me and we got married in San Francisco City Hall. We played a couple of gigs - sort of tour of the West Coast.

B.O.B: The big disappointment was that to promote 'Jumpin' In The Night' you got this big tour organised and it got cancelled twice, which basically, I think, was a death blow to the Groovies. I remember you were supposed to do 'The Old Grey Whistle Test', you were even listed as appearing in the daily papers.

C.W: Yeah, I mean I just cried, really, I literally sat down and cried because I really wanted to go back to England because I was getting fed up with San Francisco. Soon after that Cyril and I had a big tiff because my old lady, who's a really nice girl, just couldn't handle him and his old lady. Cyril seems a pretty groovy guy but if you have to live with the guy 24 hours a day you're lucky if you're not in a strait jacket by the fifth week. So I moved out with my wife and was hanging around with these friends of mine who had a band called Freestone. One of them was the guy that I worked on 'Middle Class Blues' with. Actually I didn't write 'Middle Class Blues'. I was supposed to get only arrangement credits for that but Closer Records went and put 'Ronco/Wilson'. Somebody saw Bobby Ronco about six months ago and he was incredibly pissed off - threatening law suits and all that. I got in touch with this other person that knows him and said as soon as there is any money I'll send him some. He's still waiting and so am I.

B.O.B: What was the story behind the Groovies Berlin show in April 1980?

C.W: That was the guy who runs Line Records, Uwe Tessnow, who wanted to put out 'Sneakers' the year before that, and possibly some other stuff - 'When I Heard Your name' he quite liked - and said it would be good for Germany. We gave him a licence to put out the record. We hadn't heard from him for a while when he got hold of us and said there was this big festival coming up in Berlin with The Police, Rockpile and Mitch Ryder.

B.O.B: This was one of the Rockpalast Shows?

C.W: Yeah, fucking huge place, like thirty thousand people. Anyway he said "How would you guys like to play? Obviously you won't make a lot of money because it's going to cost a lot to get you over here". I don't know how he did it but he flew us and all our gear over and back and the airline tickets alone must have cost him ten or fifteen thousand dollars - which he did make back. We played one gig in Hamburg, which was really good, in a sort of Stats Ballroom, or something, near the railway station, that was pretty nice, about three or four hundred people. Then we went on to Berlin a couple of days later, we were only there about five days, and problems started going down. The bill was switched at the last minute so we had to play before the Cramps which really pissed me off, because, well, it wasn't on. Nothing I could do about it in the long run so I just swallowed my pride and did it anyway and went through a hell of a lot of hassle with roadies sabotaging our gear and shit like that.

B.O.B: What was the Groovies line-up for that show?

C.W: That was with Dave Wright, just the old band (Chris, Cyril, Mike, George and Dave).

E.O.: So the gig was on TV was it?

C.W: It was videoed. I don't know what happened to it, whether they showed it there or what the hell they did with it.

Around this time Marc Zermati got back in touch with us and he had started a new label 'Underdog' with Dominic Lamblin who used to work for Rolling Stones Records - a big money guy. They put up the money for the Gold Star

sessions. The first week we were there nothing happened because the studio hadn't been paid yet.

B.O.B: Were these the sessions that Phil Spector was rumoured to be involved in?

C.W: Yeah. As I say, in the first few days this was supposed to happen, I quit the band and was leaving and they came looking for me. I was in a parking lot down from the hotel waiting for a taxi - Cyril leapt out of the cab and attacked me - I slugged him a couple of times - jumped on him and tried to strangle him. If it hadn't been for George Alexander and our roadie I would have done. Cyril then apologised profusely and said "Look, lets do it, I'm sorry". So we went and started work on it. We did all the covers first, which is what I think is going to come out on New Rose: 'Do I Love You', a Phil Spector cut, 'And Your Bird Can Sing', a terrible version, 'She Don't Care About Time', and a couple of other things that I just can't remember.

B.O.B: Any Stones songs?

C.W: No, I don't think so. I don't think we ever got any of the other originals finished outside of the B side of 'River Deep'. ('So Much In Love'). Towards the end of the sessions we had completed all of the backing tracks but they ran out of money and we had to stop. The studio said we can't do anymore until you're paid up. We went back to San Francisco; we were really falling apart at this time; we played a few more gigs.

B.O.B: Who was playing drums at that time?

C.W: It was still Dave Wright. I think the last gig Dave played with us was the Groovies 15th Anniversary at the Old Waldorf wall to wall dorfs as we used to call it. Sir Douglas played with us at that gig.

B.O.B: Did any of the old Groovies turn up for that one?

C.W: Oh yeah, everybody came, except Tim Lynch who was living in L.A. Soon after that Dave Wright quit the band and it was sort of like a death blow. I remember Cyril getting this call from Dave, we were having a band meeting, he told Cyril something and Cyril hung up the phone mechanically, turned around, walked down the stairs, got in his car and crashed into two cars in the street on his way out and just drove like a maniac over to his house, because he knew it was the end - we could never get the same sound with any other drummer. Dave was just really, really good. I hated him for a while but I understood why, he hadn't been well, some sort of internal complaint, his health wasn't good and he just couldn't do it anymore. We got a string of drummers after that - they were just fucking useless. We had this guy called Bridley Black, who used to be in this San Francisco punk group called Crime. He was useless and lasted about three weeks.

B.O.B: Was he the one that used to take solo's inbetween numbers?

C.W: Yeah, thats right. He almost chopped my head off with his crash one night - kicked it over - if it had hit me I'd still be in the hospital now. So I said that was it - he's out. We looked around for another drummer for another couple of weeks, the next guy we got what was his name actually he really was Bob Dylan's cousin. He showed me pictures of himself with Dylan and shit like that. He was a very weak drummer - he was totally exhausted half way through a set. It was getting worse and worse. I was getting more and more fed up, I was really fed up with Cyril, I was living with him again at the time, Korin and I had lost our place for some reason which I don't remember. We had been playing for the Stone - playing a lot of gigs in their circuit the Stone is a club in San Francisco on Broadway and they have one night in Palo Alto and one night somewhere else. Anyway we played a Hookers Ball which is one of the most bizarre conglomerations of people that you'd ever see in your whole life.

I had these two huge bodyguards, these two friends of mine, because guys in leather jock-straps were grabbing your ass and stuff like that and maniac spades with guns. So I had these two 6 foot friends of mine, karate experts in the Navy, who were fans of the band, muscling me around everywhere and getting people out of my way. They treated us really badly at this gig, we finally wound up never playing after we had loaned our gear to the Tubes. They had flown in to play it and didn't have any gear so we let them use ours. By this time we had also got a keyboard player named Mark Dunwoody, who is a really nice guy, and a good keyboard player but somehow 'Shake Some Action' with a keyboard in there going mi mi mi mi! I was getting more and more freaked out, disgusted by the whole thing because it was obvious (sings) "The thrill is gone". Anyhow we were doing this gig for these guys, in San Francisco, who were a sort of brotherhood dealers and they were fabulously wealthy - they gave us a thousand bucks up-front just to show their good faith. I thought they were really nice guys, what I didn't know was they were also associated with an organisation which is the Alestair Crowley sex magic organisation - which I found out later when I left the Groovies. Cyril wanted to play this gig, but he'd booked two gigs for the same day - one for the Stone. I said I would never play the place again and this guy was saying "Its in the contract that you'll play two sets, you'll ruin me if you don't 'cos there's lots of people aren't gonna come 'til after midnight" so Cyril said "Well, no way, just because Chris doesn't want to do it". Then Cyril said to tell me I was fired, so that was it for me, I said "Mmmm, OK". The guy was begging me to please do the gig even if it was only one set. So I said OK. We did it and there's a video of it - actually this guy in San Francisco has it. There's Cyril and I looking daggers at each other across the stage - it's quite funny. Great gig though - it sounded really good. At the end of the gig they started to pack the gear up and shit like that and I said "See you later, I'm staying here". I got in this big screaming match with them and they all told me to fuck off and I said "OK, see you later" and I turned my back on them and that was the last time I ever saw any of them except George Alexander.

B.O.B: What sort of material had you been playing around then?

C.W: The same sort of stuff that we recorded at Gold Star 'River Deep', 'Do I Love You', 'And Your Bird Can Sing', and a couple of Byrds numbers.

B.O.B: Any good originals?

C.W: No, only 'So Much In Love' and 'Shake Some Action' thats about it. They were the only originals we did, I think.

B.O.B: Were you doing a song called 'She Satisfies'?

C.W: No, thats one of Cyril's compositions. (The Groovies played this after Chris left).

B.O.B: Was it getting pretty desperate then?

C.W: Yes, it was. I mean I was getting fed up, it wasn't improving - so I just said fuck this. Anyway these guys said "We're getting this house, in Ashbury Terrace, its a fifteen room mansion and you're welcome to a room, we'll do what we can to get you started again because we've always felt semi-responsible". So I stayed in the city for another two or three months but unfortunately these peoples scene was just too crazy - loads of coke around and acid. There was one good thing about it - I started taking acid again and having a really good time. At the same time I realised that these people weren't going to do fuck all for me because they were too scatterbrained and into their own trips, also there was always the chance that the Saturation Squad was going to kick down the

door and have us all away. One of the guys felt bad for me and I was feeling really homesick for England at the time and Korin really wanted to come back. Her wishes were penultimate with me at that time because I wanted to at least keep my marriage intact. So these guys were nice enough to loan me some money to get back over here but I had to sell my Gretsch unfortunately, which was a real blow. I figured that as long as I could get back into England something would happen eventually. So we left about January 28th 1982 and moved straight away in here (Finsbury Park). I was hanging around and wondering what to do for a couple of months.

B.O.B: Did you go off music or lose interest?

C.W: No, I didn't. I didn't know where to begin really.

B.O.B: Did you feel out of touch with what was going on?

C.W: No, I didn't feel out of touch at all. I still had a lot of songs and stuff - it was just a matter of meeting some people and getting some equipment. It was much more of a challenge to do that than to stay in San Francisco because it was just beating a dead horse. The whole spirit that we had was gone - the whole camaraderie and all that - it had vanished. In late February (1982) Frenchie, from Flicknife, who the Barracudas were working with at the time, phoned me up and said the Barracudas were playing that night at the Hope & Anchor and would really like me to come down. So I went and met them all.

B.O.B: You knew their album by then?

C.W: No, I'd never heard it. Korin had met them when she'd come over in 1981 for about three months to visit her folks. She said these guys were really cool and that they really dig the Groovies music; they wanted Cyril to produce their album. So I was quite impressed with them because they reminded me of the old Groovies, they had that sort of image; and I really liked them. The drummer at that time, Graham, left a bit to be desired - he was a bit on the straight side. He left soon after that. Anyway I got blind drunk with them and said "I'll join your band" and that was it. The next day I woke up with a horrible hangover and thought "What did I do last night? Oh, no!". I'd previously made up my mind that I wasn't going to join anyone else's band and that the next thing I did was going to be my own ideas. So I hummed and harred for a few days and said "Well look, I was really drunk last night and I don't know if I can make this right now" and "Gimme some time to think about it". But after a week or so I thought what the fuck they're nice guys, its good music and Frenchie had offered them to do an album, so I figured OK as long as I can write some songs on it, but that never happened. Frenchie pulled out at the last minute. We got rid of Graham and got Terry Smith. Funny because it was a similar thing to Terry Rae because he was the boyfriend of a girl we knew. Terry wasn't really into it - he didn't have a 'band consciousness' - it was sort of 'me and the band'.

B.O.B: Did you record some stuff at Mekon Studio?

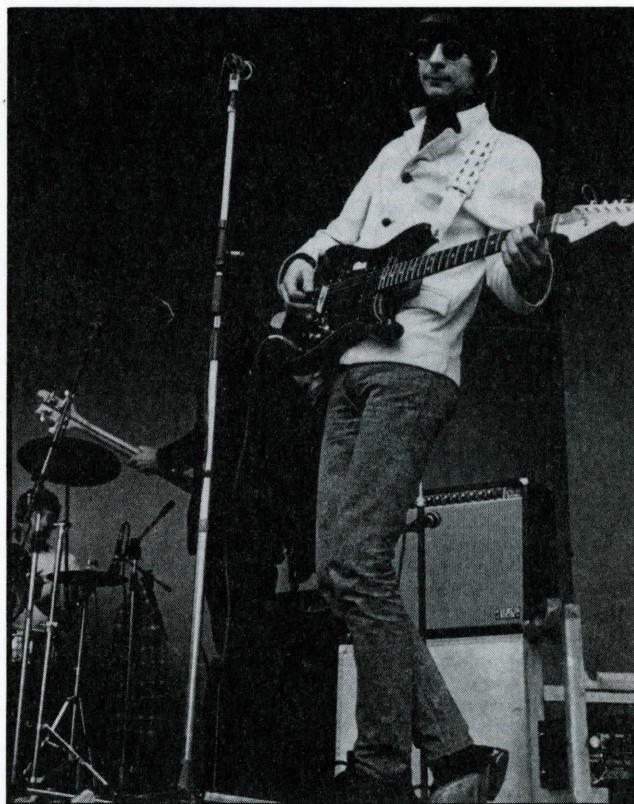
C.W: That was just before I joined when they finished that stuff.

B.O.B: Jim Dickson said to me that you were going to produce that album? ('House Of Kicks').

C.W: Yeah, I was going to. That's why they were originally talking to me, but I'm not a producer. I'm a musician, although I know what to do its just too much hassle for me. We did 'Meantime' at Ringo's studio down at Starling.

B.O.B: Did you get to meet Ringo?

C.W: No, I didn't get to. I could hear him talking behind the kitchen door and I just wanted to go "Hey man, how are you" you know? But no, he never came. It was funny, Pete Gage was a friend of Terry Smith's. He called Terry up and said "I hear you're doing



Chris with The Barracudas on stage in Sweden 1982.

a record - why didn't you ask me to produce it?". He said "Well you go for a lot of money, we can't afford you" and he said "I'll do it for nothing", but he thought it was just a single, and it wasn't until he got to the studio that he found out it was an LP - he just said "Fuck it, I'll do it anyway". Unfortunately he just wasn't that into it - he wasn't getting any money for it - except that he was promised two per cent commission which I don't think he's ever gotten because he never bothered to phone back.

B.O.B: I thought it was a weird combination, The Barracudas and Pete Gage.

C.W: Yeah, the first thing that John David said when he heard the album was that its not produced.

B.O.B: We've actually shot a bit ahead, we were talking about you joining the Barracudas?

C.W: It took me a few days to make up my mind - I finally figured what the hell - I'll get going and see what happens. The rest of the guys weren't in much better straights than me. We were all poor, everybody was on the dole and it didn't seem like Closer was going to do much with the record; as it turned out they got it fairly well around the world somehow.

B.O.B: A couple of points about the album; were you still feeling your way into the Barracudas?

C.W: Yes, I was.

B.O.B: It has a nice Groovies 'Now' sound on some of the tracks.

C.W: Most of the songs were Robin's. I wrote a couple with Jeremy like 'Be My Friend Again' where I took his lyrics and re-wrote them to this I had this tune, one of the things I was going to do with the Groovies at Gold Star but never got around to it. Quite a nice lick, I thought, quite Beatlesque or Grooviesque if you will. So I re-wrote his lyrics to fit into that. We worked on these songs and really we had no rehearsals or anything like that, it was just the four of us sitting round at some crash-pad they had, in the freezing cold, working these songs out. We couldn't afford to get a rehearsal room. I was quite pleased with it when it was done

I thought that's as good as we can do with what we had to work with. We went to Sweden at some point just after that. Soon after that Terry left because he'd got fed-up and missed a few gigs and we couldn't put up with his attitude anymore. Mark Sheppard happened to be hanging around at that time and was quite friendly towards me - reminded me of when I was 19 years old.

B.O.B: So you pulled him into the band, as he happened to be there at the time?

C.W: Yeah.

B.O.B: Is he still a T.V. Personality as well?

C.W: No, we stipulated that from now on he would be a member of the Barracudas. Session work is alright but we can't have our guys playing on an album as part of another band because it's not cool - if you don't think and act like a band then you're not a band you're just four wankers playing at being musicians.

B.O.B: Tell us about the 'Snapshots' album, that was a pretty interesting project?

C.W: I only did it, basically, for the money because I didn't know what any of the bands sounded like. I'd heard a couple of raunchy cassettes by some of them and wasn't too impressed but I figured what the hell it'd be a laugh and a month in the South of France would be alright. I got down there and it was a lot more work than I bargained for. Originally they wanted me to do it all by myself and I would get a lot of money for it but I thought, fuck me, I don't speak French that well, it's going to be a definite communications problem that might hinder the project. So I asked them if Robin could co-produce it with me. They said sure but I'd have to split the money. I said sure, that was fine. Robin is really good in the studio - with that calibre of musician-garage style.

B.O.B: He did a good job with the Stingrays.

C.W: Yeah, oh God, he did as good a job as you could do with them. So Robin and I were both going. We started thinking about French recording techniques which are primitive at their best, then we found out it's like a hippy type studio run by this hippy guy who did all the engineering and we said "No, sorry, we're going to have to bring somebody with us" so we got this guy, Nigel Barker. He was a really good engineer, I believe he worked with Robin on some stuff that Robin did with a friend of his from Geneva, some good stuff that we played and sang on. We went down and it was a really nice studio but the first three days everything broke, the machines broke, all the mics failed, the board failed, the guy was driving thousands of miles trying to get parts for it, while we were sitting around with these poor musicians who were all incredibly nervous as it was the first time, for most of them, in the studio. Some of them have done quite well since then - like The City Kids.

B.O.B: What did you think of the Owls?

C.W: The Owls I loved. I worked hard on that song. Finally as I got going I found the ones that I liked. I worked on their's as much as I could and the rest of them, like the Coronados and the Rythmeurs and that shit I just left to Robin and Nigel and said "I'm going to have some tea now, see you tomorrow". My favourites were Gamine. I really, really like them because they had that Groovies type sound and I like the way they make French work in rock 'n' roll which I had felt was impossible. Their songs were really melodic and nice and they were all good players and they were fun to be with. That was really what I spent a lot of time on and played and sang on. Les Calamites I quite liked.

B.O.B: You did a Gamine EP as well?

C.W: We both did. At the end of those sessions we stuck on another four or five days and did that, which I think sounds way better than that whole compilation. We tried to give them all their own sound but they were just

such lunatics and wanted to do weird things like three guys beating on bass drums all throughout a track and shit like that. I just had to come in and say "Shit no, I'm sorry" which made me very unpopular. That's why I opted for supervision only because really I didn't want to be labelled as a producer of most of it, besides that's what I saw Spector used to put on his albums. It was Robin's idea to use the castanets!!

B.O.B: So what have you been doing this year, maybe talk about the new Barracudas LP?

C.W: It's gonna be called 'Endeavour To Persevere' which is a line by Chief Dan George in 'The Outlaw Josey Wales' which we were watching down in the studio. We had a video of it - which we watched about 40 times, it's a really good film, (recites) "Endeavour to persevere, and we thought about it for a long time, Endeavour to Persevere, and when we thought about it for long enough we declared war on the Union". We thought what the fuck that's what we're doing: endeavouring to persevere in this fucking ridiculous game, so everybody thought well why not - it's a good, fun, title.

B.O.B: Is it a more integrated approach this time?

C.W: Yeah, John David is a fucking good producer.

B.O.B: Who's idea was He?

C.W: First we wanted Roger Bechirian. We talked to Roger about it earlier this year but it just didn't come together money-wise because Closer is not a major label and they have to get Bank drafts to get the record done. By the time we were ready to go in Roger had something else but he was down there (at Rockfield), obviously he couldn't run from one studio to another. So we were thinking of Pat Moran, who helped produce 'Drop Out' with John David. Anyway Pat said no because he was working with Roger but that we might ask John David and he just said "Sure, absolutely" which we were quite happy with. It was really good and probably one of the quickest albums I've ever done. We only recorded from about one in the afternoon 'til one at night - we got a lot of work done in that period of time. I think the selection of songs is a bit out of the ordinary for the Barracudas.

B.O.B: Any obvious covers this time?

C.W: 'Man With Money', 'World Turned Upside Down': that's a song by Leon Rosselson who is an American folk singer, came over here in the early sixties, I heard it by Dick Gaughan, a Scottish folk singer who I really like. I figured what the fuck, Big Country!! Why not give it a go. I promised Korin, my wife, that I'd write a song for her on the album, which I left 'til last. I had an idea of lyrics but I didn't know whether to make it a big production number or what, so I figured the quickest way to do it was me and an acoustic guitar and give it a 'Mull Of Kintyre' type feel. John David jumped at that and said it was perfect; in fact we had about five hours or so.

B.O.B: So it's just you and an acoustic guitar is it?

C.W: Yeah, well there's a moog on it and some keyboard synthesizer that I play - it's just a drone - and that's it.

B.O.B: Like a short song?

C.W: It's not short, it's four minutes long. I didn't mean to make it that long but I had no real idea, I would stop as we were recording it and say "Wait a minute John, give me a couple of minutes" just as I was laying down the first guitar because that's all I had to do first, just to get one guitar down which is just a guide and then do a guide vocal, then go back and re-do the guitar, triple track it, go back and re-do the vocal, triple track that and then put the effects. It was quite fun really because it was the first time I'd ever done anything like that before, all by myself, I was shitting myself for a while. I think that kind of anxiety in the studio is good because sometimes it makes you come up with your best ideas.

B.O.B: How did the others react to it?
 C.W: They just said - go to it, man.
 B.O.B: So what else is on the album?
 C.W: The single coming out in France 'The Way We've Changed' is a song - I had an idea just before we went to Sweden. I really liked the passage in 'His Last Summer' - that sort of 'Be My Baby' lick - and when I first started playing it with the Barracudas I played this counter-point to what Robin was doing and I thought it was a good hook so I said what about writing a song around that lick. While we were on tour in Sweden, when we were doing soundchecks, Robin and I were getting on stage to see what it sounded like, Jim figured out a part for it and we slowly got it together. I didn't have any lyrics for it. Robin had the idea of 'The Way We've Changed' as a good title. So I wrote the beginnings of those little bits and Jeremy wrote all of the verses and I wrote the middle eight. It was great - the first one that all three of us had a hand in and its one of my favourite songs on record. Another one of my favourites is 'Pieces Broken' just because its got a Stones'ish feel and I quite like my guitar playing, John helped me out with that because I did two and they weren't quite right so we mixed both of them together. Came out quite well, makes me sound like Mark Knopfler, nothing wrong with that!! 'Dealing With Today' is one of Jeremy's that Robin wrote the music to and which I like. 'Black Snake' is one of Robin's had for quite some time. Its a bit on the demonic side. I had this whole idea of making it a Roky and the Aliens type thing so I studied all my Duane Aslaksen licks. Anyway, I'm really, really pleased with this record and I think we've got as good a chance with this one as we've ever done and there's a lot of companies interested all over the world getting a licence for it, which I wait with bated breath 'cos it means I'll be able to pay my rent and not get slung out of here or have them turn the gas off. Because we are in dire straits, our kind of music isn't popular and nothing you can do about it. I'd really like to see a bit of musicianship come back into it and not just all fashion. I don't want to mention any names but I mean you watch Top Of The Pops, its comical, I remember years ago with the Groovies, we'd turn it on and watch it and we'd just go "Look at that guy, get the fuck out of here, thats it - I've seen it all". In the past couple of months I've seen them getting weirder and weirder, fucking guys in dresses I don't think its fair shoving them down kids throats. I think kids ought to have a chance to choose for themselves but big record companies everywhere have monopolies over the airwaves and its unfair. Its unfair to the kids and its unfair to other kinds of music

that will never be heard, bands just get fed up and all quit or all start shaving their heads or all start putting on pantyhose
 B.O.B: Or both!!
 C.W: Yeah, its kind of a joke to me, but at the same time I wouldn't be anywhere else, this is my home now and I love it here.
 B.O.B: Well, its America's loss and our gain - thats great. People couldn't believe it when you joined the Barracudas.
 C.W: It was just one of those things - it was meant to be.
 B.O.B: Its working out well, would you agree?
 C.W: Oh yeah. The only thing thats going to stop it is just survival, of us just staying alive as human beings, because we live on nothing.
 B.O.B: You must have paid a few dues.
 C.W: Thats what I thought - when's it gonna be over!! I thought I'd paid them years ago, every time I go "Well I'm glad thats over, that's it man, I've paid 'em this time, paid in full alright".
 B.O.B: So what keeps you going?
 C.W: I don't know. I suppose some stupid groundless optimism that I have that there is some justice in the world if you persevere in what you do and you believe in it, which I do. What the fuck else would I do. I could start playing Irish folk music - at least you get a good meal and a few drinks out of it.
 B.O.B: What happened to the band you were rehearsing down at the Hope & Anchor in the Summer?
 C.W: That was just an idea that never got off the ground. We couldn't get any money. Unfortunately a couple of the guys just weren't that proficient musically: they'd never been on stage before and its one of my horrors being onstage and having people forget their parts, having to stop in the middle of a number. It wasn't on the cards, but that's the way it goes.
 B.O.B: You've obviously been in touch with various ex members of the Groovies
 C.W: No, not anyone
 B.O.B: I thought Danny Mihm stayed with you?
 C.W: Oh yeah, Danny came and stayed but he's not really in the Groovies. I don't know what he's doing now because he was very disappointed when the Kingsnakes came here to use Denmark Street studios. By the end of it Danny was just saying "Shit, I love this town but I can't leave the house because I don't have any money, how do they expect me to stay here, how do they expect me to tour?!"
 Danny's five or six years older than me and he just can't put up with it anymore - he's got a house in San Francisco, a nice sword collection, all his friends are there: why leave security for a fucking piss in the wind.

THE END !!!

continued from page 27

they put Elvis in the army and replaced 'em with Paul Anka, Tommy Sands, etc. and the kids rebelled. Then they wanted some rockin' sounds and they got the Rolling Stones. When they died out people started listenin' to hippie stuff like the Dead. Then people needed rock and roll and so came Alice Cooper, Kiss, The Dolls, Rock and Roll won't die! It just takes vacations, until people wise up.

MICHAEL: Kiss is a great example. Parents hated them, critics hated them. And they packed the stadiums. Kid's loved 'em.

RUDI: As far as I'm concerned, the only rock and roll that's worth anything is rock and roll that your parents don't like. Then you know it's the real thing. That's what's been wrong - parents can watch MTV now and they'll

listen to Elvis Costello and The Police and they'll go "that's nice, I'm glad my kid listens to this". Like years ago, there was a big gap and now there isn't much of a gap. A kid'll be wearing Sergio Valente jeans and so will his old man, while they sit around and listen to "Saturday Nite Fever". If the kid was diggin' The Fuzztones, his parents wouldn't approve, so we must be doin' something right.

With that The Fuzztones left to spread the word of psychedelic madness. But with their forthcoming releases and constant performing, it won't be long until their hard work has paid off with a large following. You will hear from The Fuzztones.

Charles P. Lamey

WARRAT

Warf Rat is, band for band, the most quality independent label in Los Angeles. This is presented, as fact, for your examination, with the release of "Magic Circle" from The Point and "Betsy's House" from Wednesday Week (an all girl group, yes, but please don't call them the next anyone).

These are young bands, often and erroneously filed in the Paisley Underground bin. The Point and Wednesday Week, however don't display their influences as indiscreetly as some other bands. They employ them subtly, enhancing their own sounds richly, instead of revising someone else's for the umpteenth time.

Both have had tracks on the Warf Rat Tales Compilation album and Wednesday Week appeared on Ethan James' Radio Tokyo Tapes release, but these are their own records and that makes all the difference. Proper credit must go to producer Vitus Matare (from The Last) because their sound is cohesive and more textured than either previous effort.

The Point's "Magic Circle" is a great mix of psychedelia and classic pop with a tab of acid. When guitarist Tom Alford cites David Bowie and The Jam as major influences, you know you can't stamp this band with any single sound. As a diehard pop aficionado, the key songs are those bouncy, hummable tunes like "Magic Circle", "All My Life", and the smart cover choice of "I Like Girls" written by Gary Valentine, formerly of The Know and Blondie. Valentine is one of those unheralded great songwriters lost in the club scramble of the late 70's. However The Point is by no means that easily pigeonholed into pure pop, although it seems Joe Stebbins and Alford, as co-songwriters, have a real penchant for it. Nope, take that touch of doo-wop before "Someday" and then how about The Sonics "Strychnine" right after "Magic Circle" on side one? and the psychedelic interlude that wanders into "I Like Girls"? Varied tastes and talents in this band, no doubt about it. Wednesday Week is what could be called an atypical girl group, but those two words are so constricting, it's a crime to use them at all. The

EP "Betsy's House" while on the whole outwardly upbeat, needs careful listening to discern all is not as bright as it seems. "I Don't Know" is the only song in which the melody isn't merely pretty, but menacing, and the lyrics hit close enough to the heart to be equally so. Matare, in addition to producing also plays keyboards and flute, which gives "Sad Little Dog" an eerie, kind of twilight sound.

"Betsy's House" has an abundance of pretty melodies and pretty harmonies, rather than the strident harmonies of, say The Bangles, which seems so hard in comparison to Kristi Callan's exceptionally sweet voice. "Perspective" and "I Don't Know" tie for favorite tracks. Both capture the confusion of love without cliches.

Wednesday Week manages to confront it in a unique manner, and prompts the observation it looks to be a good start for Warf Rat. With Matare's production sounding so good and The Point and Wednesday Week improving and growing so quickly - Warf Rat is definitely a label to watch.

Kelly Mayfield

Ed's Note: I can't endorse these two records enough. They arrived in the office in the first few days of 1984 and have had a considerable cheery effect. Next issue Chip Lamey has promised a full piece on The Point and if Kristi gets round to sending me all the promised info, I'm planning a full blown article on Wednesday Week - "Betsy's House" stands somewhere between the subtler, stranger sounds of the Marine Girls and the pop sensibility of The Bangles, it's a superb debut platter. So don't delay, send off today to:

Warf Rat Records
P.O. Box 25A39
Los Angeles
California 90025
USA

and get yourself fitted up with vinyl from two of L.A.'s most promising combos.



Under the Spell of the Dream Syndicate

When I arrived in Los Angeles last September, one of the disappointments was that the Dream Syndicate weren't going to play any shows during my visit, in fact they weren't even in town but up in San Francisco recording their second album. As luck would have it, I made a flying trip up to that city by the bay and through the help of scene-maker Spock, amongst others, I was able to meet singer/guitarist, Steve Wynn. After a couple of phone calls, he picked me up from Jim Keylor's BSU/Army Street Studios and we embarked on a crazy tour of the city. Any hope of an interview quickly evaporated: instead I got the unique experience of seeing Steve in the studio listening to playbacks of the scratch mixes for "The Medecine Show", acting as dj on a local college radio station and I also had the opportunity of chatting with him in a relaxed way before my tape recorder reared its ugly head to restrain the conversation. At one point as we sped towards the Automat, he was grilling me about how much improvisation the Soft Boys allowed on stage, at another we were talking about one of San Francisco's foremost journalist/writers, Ralph Gleason. Wynn is an excitable, animated guy: we drove half way across town that night just so he could watch a German TV video of John Coltrane at an acquaintance's place. However one of the most vivid memories remains, staring across a table at him, both of us well gone on a bottle of Scotch, in a Mexican bar on the edge of China Town at 3 a.m. as he poured out this tale about Creedence Clearwater Revival having reformed, turned up unannounced on the campus of the University of Berkley only a couple of weeks before, played an amazing set, then disappeared how I wish I could have got all that down on tape.

Anyway I didn't get my interview: instead Steve promised to call for me the following Sunday when we were both back in Los Angeles. At 10 p.m. on the Sunday he materialised at Byron Coley's Hotel for rock 'n' roll degenerates where I was staying and off we went on another long and interesting night that ended in a 24 hour doughnut house!! First stop was the outside bar on the end of Santa Monica Pier to conduct the ensuing conversation: it turned out to be closed so we had to make do with the noise of the drinkers in the inside bar and the dreadful piped muzak. As Steve remarked: "You're missing the whole reason I like this place, the quietness, the ocean". Well I had to take his word for it but at least we got the interview done.

B.O.B: A couple of embarrassing historical questions first of all: I get the impression that you're very down on the whole Suspects' period?

S.W: Well the period is not very important to anything. You've heard the record, it's far from being worthy. It's important only because I met Kendra and Russ and Gavin. The world will end and the Suspects will not be mourned when it ends.

B.O.B: About Steve Suchil, the bass player with the Suspects, what happened to him?

S.W: He was about to pass his exams in law at the time: he's now a practising lawyer. When we

go to Sacramento, he comes to the shows. He plays in a jazz fusion band for fun to keep his chops up. He never was that serious about it. He was the first person to ever play me the Velvet Underground! He played me "White Light, White Heat"! I was nineteen years old.

B.O.B: The other question is about your first release on Down There which was under the name of the Fifteen Minutes

S.W: I'm proud of that. I had access to a 4 track recorder for a while and at the same time I had a strong distaste and cynicism for everything in music. I'd been in about ten different bands, everything from backing a transexual to playing pop to playing avant garde jazz, everything! Then I was in a band where I had to compromise everything I did. I wanted to do anything else but music. I decided before I left I'd do one record I'd be proud of and call it Fifteen Minutes, my fifteen minutes of fame. So I went down to the basement, set up the 4 track and recorded these tracks; they were made up on the spot, it was entirely self indulgent. I made 500 copies and said to myself: "that's a record that'll stand, I'll give it to my grand kids". Then that was it, end of story, end of music career. Sell the 4 track, sell the guitar, sell the amp and do something reasonable but I never got around to doing all that because I met Karl.

B.O.B: Who else played on that record?

S.W: On the A-side, I played everything myself. On the B-side, two friends of mine played bass and drums, they're from Alternate Learning. The bass player Carolyn O'Rourke was my old girl friend but the drummer's not the one who's now in True West. As you can see, everything does connect.

B.O.B: The Dream Syndicate played a gig under the name of the Fifteen Minutes, tell me about that? Didn't Sue Hoffs from The Bangles sing "Pablo Picasso" from the audience with you that night?

S.W: That was a strange set, that wasn't the Dream Syndicate, that was a failure!! At that point, it was back when I was naive about

The Syndicate of 1984: from the top Dave, Dennis, Karl, Steve.



photo: David Arnoff

things, I wanted us to play a real small club as another band and have no expectations, just play as though we weren't the Dream Syndicate, play anything at all. People would show up and we could have a great time. It was ridiculous, it came off as pompous, unimportant and stupid, at best we got a good jam session out of it. We've done better versions of "Pablo Picasso" though.

B.O.B: Do you still have many connections with the Davis music scene?

S.W: I'm still friends with Russ.

B.O.B: Tell me about your involvement with True West

S.W: They gave me a plane ticket and a sandwich and I produced the record, that's all there is to it. The way I produce, I just say: "Turn up the guitars, make it weird", it's all from a fan's point of view. I love producing but I don't know the first thing about it. Russ wanted to make that record way too safe, he wanted the guitars quieter, the vocals standard, he wanted it like a standard pop band. I just came in and told them to give the voice a lot of mid range, make it sound like it's coming through a telephone and to turn the guitars up. I was a real trouble maker, that's what they needed.

B.O.B: On their single "Lucifer Sam" you play guitar, is that the same version that's on the Bring Out Your Dead 12" EP?

S.W: Yes, I play the reverb lead stuff. They'd already recorded it and I came up to mix it. They needed another guitar part and Russ told me to play whatever I wanted.

B.O.B: You weren't involved in the final sessions for their French LP, "Hollywood Holiday"?

S.W: Right I didn't do any of them. In fact I only did four tracks for the EP, I didn't do "I'm Not Here". I did another song which didn't come out, it was horrible and Russ'd tell you that too, I'm not talking behind his back, I slept through it!! The rest was real good, I had a good time. I might be producing a band called Phil Blues.

B.O.B: You mean the band that features Ward Dotson from The Gun Club?

S.W: Right, they're real good. We played a show with them and I talked with Ward and Mike Adder, their other guitarist from Middle Class - they're good guys. They're the sort of band I want to produce. I wanted to produce Green On Red, I was going to co-produce with Chris D. but we went on tour and I got left out of that. It's a big regret.

B.O.B: Tell me about your record label, Down There.

S.W: The whole Down There thing, the label's meant to be as permanent as the record it was an excuse label. I did everything myself outside of the cover of the Fifteen Minutes, which a friend of mine Ed Horneij drew. It was done in a basement, I lived in a basement so it was "down there". I had no dreams of being a label mogul, I didn't want to do that at all. There was no ambition behind it, it was just something that I could look at and be proud of.

B.O.B: You seemed to be in about a dozen different bands at that time. Weren't you rehearsing with Kristi and Kelly from Wednesday Week?

S.W: Fifteen Minutes was after that. I'd already played in a dozen bands before Kristi and Kelly. We have this thing here called "The Recycler", you look through there if you want to form a band. They're the worst listings: if you wanted a guitarist, all you'd find would be "into Rush, into Led Zeppelin", I'd have to go for that because the pickings are so small, you'd go for anything you can get. That's what I mean by compromise because I'd figure I do like Jimmy Page so I can get away with it. It's no way to form a band.

B.O.B: What was Go Dee Dee?

S.W: That was Kristi, Kelly and David (Provost) for one week. That's how we met through that band; you see everything pays off. I've got a very short attention span, that's why it

didn't happen. I was very impatient, I still am but I've got a band I like a lot at the moment, so it keeps my interest.

B.O.B: You actually rehearsed with Sid Griffin when he left the Unclaimed, didn't you?

S.W: That was kind of fun. That was at the exact same time the Dream Syndicate were forming, before Dennis. I wanted to do two bands at once, I thought it would be great. I could have one band where I could write the songs and sing, it would be really weird original stuff, and I could have my sixties band. I thought it would be fun to play sixties garage covers. But I couldn't do both. After I'd been playing with Sid and Barry for a couple of months I realised that the Dream Syndicate was working out really well.

B.O.B: Was the Dream Syndicate your idea?

S.W: It wasn't an idea; you've heard all the hot rock stories, they're true. We just wanted to make a bunch of money. Karl and I had equal contempt for the music scene and if you'd been here then, it was contemptible. There was no reason to form a band. Why should we form a band just to at best be part of a circle of people who go to an after hours club called the Zero. At best you'd be hip enough to go to the Zero, who needed that? All we wanted to do was make a bunch of money and/or bunch of noise.

B.O.B: How did you run into Karl?

S.W: I don't even know! I don't remember! Somehow we ended up playing guitar together. The first memory I have is of us playing "Susie Q" for hours and hours. All we had was this agreement between us that if we played a song together, we had equal time for solos. I'll play rhythm for you and you'll play rhythm for me.

B.O.B: How did you rope in Dennis?

S.W: (Laughs) How did we rope Dennis into this horrible thing? That was all Kendra. She'd been doing the hard sell on him for a while, saying "I know these guys who play this wild stuff" so he finally came to a rehearsal one day. I knew Dennis, the Human Hands were a respectable band out here, they were popular and made records. We didn't know what to do, here was this guy who'd come down. So we said we'd do "Susie Q" and asked him if he knew it. He said he knew it and I told him to just play a beat and that eventually I'd give him a cue to do something. We'd played it for an hour and he'd look at us as if to ask, "Are we going to stop?". We'd played for a long time, he taped the whole thing then went home and we figured that was that, that's the last we'd see of him. Four days later, merely out of courtesy to ask what he was going to do, I phoned him. He said: "Well since I was with you, I've listened to that tape about five times a day - incredible, I can't believe it, I'd like to play with you guys some more". At that point we still weren't taking it seriously, we still didn't have a name, we weren't planning on playing or recording. It was then that we decided that we might do something because he's a motivator. We were and still are lazy. Dennis is a good motivator.

B.O.B: So had you written a lot of songs or did the songs evolve as the band evolved?

S.W: They evolved as the band evolved. I've written a lot of songs, I always write songs. I'll write something for a particular day or time. I don't like digging up old songs. The only song we did dig up was "That's what you always say" which we stripped clean; we gave it all new words and parts, everything.

B.O.B: You said it still wasn't serious when Dennis joined?

S.W: The first thing was to make a record. We made the EP during our third week. I think bands should do that all the time. I'm always seeing bands at their first gig that are better then go down hill all the way, bands that are better right away. We just said, if we think this is good, then someone else has



Younger than yesterday! l-r Kendra, Karl, Steve, Dennis.

pic: Debbie Leavitt

to as well; it's raw we just wrote the songs last week, let's do it because there are so many bad records out, this can't be worse. We didn't expect it to be a big deal, we figured it would sell a thousand copies and it would come close to breaking even. You can sell a thousand copies of anything.

B.O.B: When you recorded it, did you put up the money yourselves?

S.W: Yes. The 4 track, I was telling you about, I sold it and that's how we financed the record. That's the way it works, always selling one thing to get another.

B.O.B: Were the songs on the EP written pretty much on the spot?

S.W: They were already there.

B.O.B: What about a song like "When You Smile"?

S.W: That's written - it's real song. There were no plans, we didn't say: "Let's do a spare song with drama and eeriness".

B.O.B: I read that you thought "Sure Thing" and "Some Kinda Itch" were complete and couldn't be bettered so they weren't re-recorded for "The Days of Wine and Roses". Was that a glib quote?

S.W: Everything I say is a glib quote! In fact I'm not too glib any more. I think they could be bettered; "Some Kinda Itch" is better now. Sometimes the first thing you do is the best way to do it. I don't think "That's What You Always Say" on the album is any better.

B.O.B: I agree. I think "When You Smile" is best on the EP.

S.W: I like that more on the album, I think it's too fast on the EP.

B.O.B: So you decided to carry Down There on after the EP came out?

S.W: There was no decision to carry the label on. I did it because Green On Red are my best buddies, I thought they're God's answer to everything and could singlehandedly stop every evil in the world. They were too drunk and too poor to get it together; they said they were going to make 50 cassettes of this record and get them around the stores. We'd already started to get money back from the last

record so I offered to put up half the money to put it out. It wasn't a money making move but it did make money, it's sold 2,000 copies. Good for them!

B.O.B: You once asked for bands to send in their cassettes to that P.O. Box Number, are you still interested in that?

S.W: I'm hardly ever home now. If I see something that's really that great, I'll do it. I've offered it to both the Long Ryders and the Del Fuegos I've told them both that I think they're great and that if they want to be on Down There, then fine but I feel that they should get something better. I'm a lousy label chief, I told them: "I think you're great, I don't want you on my label". The Long Ryders are better off on PVC than on Down There.

B.O.B: What about the Del Fuegos?

S.W: I think they'll do better. The label is there if anybody needs it. Green On Red couldn't get anything better at the time; they couldn't get a better deal because nobody knew who they were, they weren't playing around very much. I felt they needed to put a record out.

B.O.B: How did you get to be friends with them?

S.W: We played a show with them at the Cathay De Grande: they played upstairs, we played downstairs. We finished the show at one in the morning and got drunk. Dan Stuart came up to me, threw his arms around me and said: "I love you! You remind me of William Faulkner." A friendship was born, that's all it took. I thought, I like you. They're my friends: I'd do anything I could for them.

B.O.B: Do you feel part of this new L.A. scene?

S.W: No, absolutely no part of it at all. At best some of the people on the scene are good people and they have interesting bands. We have nothing to do with it.

B.O.B: So it was coincidental that the Dream Syndicate started at the same time?

S.W: Purely coincidental. We happened to do some shows with the other bands. At that time there were either bands that were unoriginal

or uninspired, there were older bands that were good but had moved on to better things or were on their way down. Or there were these new bands that at least had the spunk to do something. All we shared in common with the Bangs and Salvation Army was that we were new and innocent and naive. If there is any "Paisley Underground", we're not part of it. I was nine years old when the sixties ended, I couldn't care less about the sixties. There's no reason to go back. If you repeat the past, you're condemned to be forgotten. "Paisley Underground": it's cute, it's a nice idea but it's no more substantial than any other fad that's happened. The good bands will go on and the bad bands will be part of history. At the same time my favourite bands have always been disposable bands, there's nothing wrong with being disposable. The Gods' "Radar Eyes" - an amazing song, a song we used to do - the Gods matter nothing to history, they never changed the rock music world. The best versions of "Who Do You Love" weren't famous, the Preachers, the Woolies.

- B.O.B: What do you think you'll be doing in 10 years time?
- S.W: The same thing as I'm doing now.
- B.O.B: You don't think you'll become a burnt out wreck which is what most pop stars become after a decade in the ring?
- S.W: Do they? I don't think they do.
- B.O.B: Why's that? Instinct?
- S.W: Instinct? Do you mean savvy? I think in 10 years time I'll be writing songs and playing them.
- B.O.B: Are the Dream Syndicate now geared to becoming big stars?
- S.W: I was reading what Tom Waits was saying in an interview in the paper today. Here's a guy who's made over eight albums, been around for over ten years and never been a big star, just a cult secret. He's still been around all that time and made some great records and he can still afford to live off what he does. He said, "Look I see what stardom's all about and you don't have any privacy; I don't know if I want that" You don't have to be a big star to survive. Ask me if I want to be then sure I do.
- B.O.B: I think you're entering a new phase which is geared to a higher level
- S.W: Sell out? Sell out? You think sell out?
- B.O.B: No, not at all. I mean you're signed to a big record label for instance
- S.W: That's not the motivation for the change. The change led to the big label. Four months ago no label wanted to touch us. We made tapes of these new songs and they got around; that's what helped. We don't want to be a sixties band, we don't want to be the Velvet Underground.
- B.O.B: I think that from what I heard of the basic tracks at the Automat, last week, the band has changed dramatically. Do you think Dave Provost's arrival has changed things?
- S.W: Immeasurably. His personality is different to Kendra's. Kendra's was spunky, inspirational, and wild which made us more like that. With Dave, he's really solid. When you talk about the bass being the bottom of the band, Dave is that bottom. We can fly around but he's always there. He's the most dependable, knowledgeable bass player I've ever worked with. It's got to change you. The more tools you work with, the more things you want to try, the more things you want to build.
- B.O.B: The rhythm section now sounds awesome. Before it was a little understated
- S.W: It wasn't a rhythm section before: Kendra sometimes was a solo instrument. Dave's more an r'n'b bass player. He's played a lot of rhythm'n'blues and soul - we all like soul music but there wasn't any soul in the music before. "The Days of Wine and Roses" has no soul per se; it's got heart and emotion. Now there's a little more soul in it.

B.O.B: Whose idea was it to bring Sandy Pearlman in to produce it, the new LP that is? It's an interesting combination.

S.W: What do you think of when you think of Sandy Pearlman?

B.O.B: I think about the Blue Oyster Cult and the Clash.

S.W: I think of the Dictators.

B.O.B: It was a band decision then, not A&M telling you had to have such and such a producer?

S.W: He was already part of the package when we went label shopping. He's been with us since early May; he actually started thinking of working with us when Kendra was still in the band. He saw us at Kendra's last show. We had mutual friends, he came down to the show and talked to me. I think the second Clash album's great. I think he made them sound great. He's got more feeling for emotion, heart and soul than anyone else I've ever worked with. He's got real strong feeling for things that affect him and hit his mood, rather than just sound.

B.O.B: I'm really dying to hear the results. "Don't Fear The Reaper" by the Cult is one of my all time faves so I'm curious to hear the changes Pearlman will bring, especially as I like Chris D.'s production on your debut LP. Maybe you could say something about that?

S.W: Chris is a very raw producer. The Green On Red record sounds so great and raw. It reminds me of the "Tonight's The Night" Neil Young band - it sounds like it was cut at 4 in the morning right between being drunk and having a hangover Chris is good at getting that feeling where you're still a bit high but you're just beginning to come down and do some very sick things. He gets that with every record he does, he did it with the Gun Club. It's a nice line between exhilaration and realization of sickness. Sandy's more of 11.30 to midnight producer whereas Chris is a 4 in the morning producer; Sandy's right when you've had your fourth or fifth drink and you feel you're the greatest person that's lived, you get up and you'll be standing in the middle of the bar and you yell and you get into a fight with someone. Sandy gives you this feeling while you're playing and what you feel is real strength.

B.O.B: The material for the "Medicine Show" sounds much stronger than that on the last LP.

S.W: Song for song it's going to be better than the last album. I've got nothing against the last album but it's going to be difficult not to put it down when I start talking about the new record. I love the songs on the last album but I think you've got to get better or forget it. If you're just treading the same water, forget it.

B.O.B: Do you have any vivid memories of the recording sessions for "The Days of Wine and Roses"?

S.W: It happened in six hours. I remember it was midnight when we went in and 6 a.m. when we went out. We dubbed the vocals the next day.

B.O.B: So it's mostly live in the studio.

S.W: Oh it is. "When You Smile" is entirely live. It was all eye contact and right there. Karl and I had to look at each other because the headphones were so bad we couldn't hear what was happening. On the title track it sounds like there's interplay but the only interplay was us watching each other's hands. I'd look over at Karl and he'd be playing an E chord on the twelfth fret so I'd say "OK he's doing that" and I'd have to imagine what it would be like. I'd do a contrasting figure on the seventh fret. I couldn't hear a thing he was doing, it was all eye contact.

B.O.B: "The Days of Wine and Roses" is an amazing track

S.W: It was a blur at the time.

B.O.B: Not only do I like the guitar playing but the lyrics and emotion appeal to me. You sound like you're on the edge, like you're the guy in the song.



What a waste of good beer, Karl! Mr Wynn on the air as guest dj at Tower Records, Sherman Oaks, 1983.

photo: Ed Colver

S.W: It's a semi true story. He's very tense, he doesn't know what to do, he doesn't know which way to face, he's got his girl on the ledge and he's got his contacts from all these outside sources and he sits there and doesn't know which way to turn, it's scary And I'd never seen the movie until after the album came out, with Jack Lemmon and Lee Remick - it's a film about alcoholism. In short Jack Lemmon is a businessman who likes to drink and meets Lee Remick who's a sweet girl, he gets her into drink slowly, she hates to drink at first they become alcoholics and it follows them through their life, how they become drunks and lose everything, going from a good business life to just a shack. I can't describe it, it's a very painful film The new stuff is just so different. I can never imagine doing an album like "The Days of Wine and Roses" again - that's the type of thing you do when you've never done a record before. It's naive, it's all guts, no tampering with the mind. There are people who say, and I used to say it, that's the way to record - all guts, all sex and passion and no mind. It's the mind that fucks you up. That's kind of true, it's great when you do things through passion. An example would be if you're a Rolling Stones fan: you'd say "The Rolling Stones Now" is the best thing they ever did because after that they got too brainy about it. You'd say "Let It Bleed" is ok but when they went on from there, they got more and more brains and less and less guts. It's a balance, that's why I think "Let It Bleed" may be the best Stones' album because that's where they still had the sex, they could still get the erection but they started to think what they could do with it! (Laughter)

B.O.B: What about a song like "Tell Me When It's Over"?

S.W: That's the most optimistic endemic thing we've ever done. In short it's the whole

attitude of you wanting to do something and somebody is telling you that it won't work, "I've been there and it won't work". If you want to be a writer and that person's saying "You can't write like that, I've tried and it failed", you say "I want to make my own mistakes, tell me about them when it's over." That whole idea didn't get across because most people complained that the band was bitching about something on the first track, so it was a downer, nobody wanted to know. I think people should do things on their instincts and fail on their own, they'll get more from failing than they would by compromising with what has been learned before. Once you fail or succeed on your own terms, you can go on and start learning lessons.

B.O.B: Changing the subject, I'd like to ask you about all these cover songs that you've done You've got quite a reputation for doing them.

S.W: We needn't do covers, there's no thought pattern. We'll learn something on impulse; we drove to a show in Fresno and "Werewolves of London" was on the radio. We said "That's the greatest song". We'd heard it before but forgotten about it, it was when Kendra was in the band, it's only 3 chords. We got to do the sound check in Fresno and I played the 3 chords and that was it, we've done that cover for about 8 months now. That's how they come.

B.O.B: Was it a big shock when Kendra decided to leave?

S.W: No she hated touring, I knew she hated it and I knew she cared about David (Roback) and wanted to do things together with him. The answer was that we weren't going to replace Kendra, we were going to start over again. We still do the old songs but they're not the same.

B.O.B: Can you say a bit about Dave Provost's background? Was he an obvious choice?

S.W: I'd been friends with him for a couple of

years. When Kendra quit the band, the first person I called was Dave. If he'd said no, I don't know who I would have gone to. My first thought was Dave and he was surprised. We hadn't talked to each other for a year, not since the Syndicate had formed. He was very excited because it was right up his alley and he was playing with Wednesday Week and the Droogs both of whom he liked but this is what he wanted to do.

B.O.B: Let's talk about some of the songs that are on this new album?

S.W: The new LP is a mean hard record.

B.O.B: What about a track like "Burn"?

S.W: It's another mean hard song. I think the lyrics are better, I hope there's going to be a lyric sheet this time. On the first album I liked the lyrics but they weren't really mature - isn't that terrible? What am I going to say about this album in a year? (Laughs). "Burn" is a very personal song, I don't want to talk about it. It's all there in the song. The motivation for a song is a whole different thing.

B.O.B: "Still Holding On To You" - what about that?

S.W: It's my first real love song, love beyond death, love beyond any element at all.

B.O.B: Are you looking forward to going to England and Europe?

S.W: I'm excited about that, I'm curious how a band like us will do there. They smashed X, they smashed the Blasters, they smashed Wall of

Voodoo, that's the L.A. record for you! They loved the Gun Club, I guess.

"The Medicine Show" will be out in America on A & M in late February, sadly there's no release date for it in England yet. If you haven't already done so, get your paws on a copy of the band's recent Rough Trade 12" 45. The A-side is "Tell Me When It's Over", which you've just been reading about, the flipside is more interesting as it features the Dream Syndicate in full flight, live, taken from a KPFR radio broadcast in 1982. Every time I play it, I can't help feeling some sadness in that the music belongs to the past now, to a band that we'll never have the pleasure of experiencing on stage in Europe. However the performances are dynamite specially the way they've reworked "Some Kinda Itch" and "Sure Thing" from the Down There EP. As a bonus there's one of the group's infamous covers, this time a version of the Buffalo Springfield's "Mr Soul" plus you get some hilarious liner notes, written in a mock intellectual fashion (at Wynn's request) by Byron Coley and the artwork is a spoof on an old Tony William's Blue Note Records' sleeve.

Right now I'm just waiting for them to set foot on English soil to blow our minds.

Nigel

Special thanks to Amy McMillan for all her help with information, photographs, tapes etc. (For more historical background/discography check out the article in Blitz magazine, March/April 1983).

photo by Mike Tighe

STING RAYS : : : : OP



BANANA MEN ?

Since we last featured those lovable fruitcakes from North London, the Sting-rays in these pages, a fair amount of water has flowed under their bridge. Therefore I figured it was time to collar ringleaders Alec and Bal for a chat about their current activities, their album "Dinosaur" and, ahem, the little matter of that controversial group from the USA, The Banana Men.

The combo have a new 45 due to be unleashed on the unsuspecting world, it'll be the last to feature double bassist Keith who is having to quit the Rays due to the pressures of his finals exams in June: he'll soon be a fully qualified medic. The A-side is an Alec composition "Escalator" which is the band's most accomplished and tuneful waxing to date, lots of twelve string guitars and a sound that is not unlike vintage Creedence Clearwater. The flip features two instrumentals, the amazing "Loose Lip Sync Ship" plus a vocal-less mix of the a-side that Bal describes as "like folkabilly Link Wray". It's on Big Beat, by the way.

One of the main themes to emerge from our conversation was that both Alec and Bal feel they're

moving away from what Greg Shaw once described as "an interesting combination between rockabilly, sixties garage and Dr Feelgood's r'n'b". Live their shows are still full of that joyous wild abandon though as Bal is quick to point out: "We haven't got a live sound, it depends which crappy PA we're put through and which drunken PA bloke wants to crank the voice up too loud". Their debut LP "Dinosaur" was very much of a schizophrenic affair with one side representing them as they are live whilst the other was more produced and experimental. The latter certainly set the cat amongst the pigeons, with the fans up in arms, asking where live favourites such as the "Crushes" were. For me, it was the first sign that the Sting-rays had got it in them to shake off all the trash/garage associations and maybe pull something inspired and original out of it all. I was delighted therefore when Alec told me: "The Sting-rays are getting more acoustic orientated. When I write songs I write on acoustic guitar because I really like folk music anyway - Judy Collins, Joan Baez - often I just write using open chords and it does tend to have a sort of folky feel to it". It's a strand of influence that can be traced right back to "Math of Trend" on the group's debut EP - Bal: "Math of Trend" has got twelve string on it - it's the folk bit though the song itself is still a hard heavy punk song". Here's talk that Big Beat will finance a second album and it could see more changes being wrung: Alec: "If we do this new album I want to put a couple of Gene Clark songs on it" whilst Bal sees this pattern towards folkier music continuing: "Production-wise, one of my favourite albums is 'Beatles For Sale' which has real heavy use of acoustic guitars on it - that's, what I always aim for when we go for production".

It'll be interesting to see how far their fans allow them to get with these ideas, it'll also be interesting to see whether the Sting-rays themselves can develop these ideas, as they'd be the first to acknowledge their own shortcomings as musicians: Bal: "I'm not a musician at all, I can't play anything, I can't keep time ... the last time we did a session I nearly walked out, I couldn't even do a tambourine track", whilst Alec admits "The only reason I'm the drummer is 'cos I'm the only one of us that can keep the beat. Maybe I'm adequate now but I can't play a proper drumkit - as far as each musician is concerned, I'm the weakest at my instrument in the band. I'm not too bothered about that because, live, it doesn't really matter because we're not really doing anything fantastic or complex, but when you're in the studio it makes you realise the limitations". With the departure of Keith, there'll be room for



LOWER EAST SIDE GARAGE PUNK WITH THE FUZZTONES

Before the first chord is struck, one can sense the Fuzztones will provide some really cool sounds. They just look right. Using vintage Vox/Rickenbacker guitars, Vox organs, and Vox/Fender amps, dressing all in black with Rudi Protrudi wearing one black glove like his inspiration Sean Bonniwell, and having an intense, arrogant stage presence that is on par with the best sixties punk bands, the Fuzztones could sound mediocre, yet still entertain.

But, they're far from being mediocre. This is a hot little group that's worked extremely hard to develop the garage/psychedelic scene in New York. Their music is full of drive and energy. They do an amazing job with covers of songs originally done by The Music Machine, Blues Magoos, Count Five, Raiders, etc. and their originals are equally as authentic. Once the Fuzztones get more records out, they'll surely be an important group. They already have a substantial audience, thanks to sharing stages or touring with the likes of The Fleshtones, Cramps, and Lords of The New Church to mention only a few.

As a spin-off of the once very promising pop/punk band Tina Peel, Rudi Protrudi and Deb O'Nair realise there's a lot of hard work and setbacks in this world of rock and roll. Because of those dues paying years, they have the experience to overcome any obstacles The Fuzztones might have to face in the future.

With that in mind, welcome to the mind expanding world of Rudi Protrudi (vocals/guitar), Deb O'Nair (organ/vocals), Michael Jay (vocals/bass), Ira (drums) and Elan Portnoy (guitar).

B.O.B: Why Did Tina Peel evolve into The Fuzztones?

RUDI: As Tina Peel we moved to New York City from Harrisburg, Pa. in 1976 and spent four years looking for a bass player that could fit in We never did have a permanent bassist. One guy lived in Harrisburg and commuted! He lost us a record deal with Polydor and from then on things went downhill. In late '79 we found we were being steered into bein' more commercial by our manager and consequently we weren't havin' any fun doin' that stuff. So Deb and I formed The Fuzztones as an

offshoot. Originally we were still Tina Peel goin' by a different name and playin' on the side doin' stuff for fun as opposed to profit.

B.O.B: How does your music now differ from Tina Peel?
RUDI: Well, Tina Peel was like a bubblegum band influenced by bubblegum but with a late '70's punk edge. We were influenced by The Monkees and The Archies

DEB: The Raiders.

RUDI: What I always dug about punk was they could sing about anything and kick it out, whereas pop was always wimpy, especially bubblegum So I wanted to merge the two. What we got was real similar to Tony Basil's "Hey Mickey" but several years before. I tended to write warped lyrics too, which hampered our chances for success, I'm sure We also used to dress in black and white polka dots and stripes. Very visually arresting and

DEB: We were wearin that stuff in '76 and last year it became the "in" look on 8th Street.

RUDI: Anyhow, I guess we were ahead of our time and most people had trouble relating to it The Fuzztones play much more grungy stuff, still 60's oriented but definitely not wimpy. I guess livin on the Lower East Side has had its effect

B.O.B: How long did it take for The Fuzztones to take shape?

DEB: About four years. We played our first gig in 1980 (Hurrah) but we had been doin' this for about three months before we actually played the gig.

B.O.B: Was there any problem finding musicians that were into what you were doing?

RUDI: Yeah. Even now if we would be lookin' it would be difficult. This band is as much a gang as it is a group and we have a lot of viewpoints that don't necessarily conform to the norm. Both musically and in our life-style. In 1980 it was almost impossible to find anyone who was even remotely interested in this stuff. Later on we heard about The Chesterfield Kings but when we started we had no idea there were any other bands doin' this kind of stuff.

DEB: The only band we knew about was The Slickee Boys in D.C., and we used to do shows with them as Tina Peel. They used to do one or two psychedelic kinda songs and, um, they're way ahead of their time, too. Great band.

RUDI: In the beginning, we wanted to do this so bad that we took people who had no concept of what we were doin' and moulded them into what we were doing. I had to teach our first bass player how to play. Our drummer was a psychotic who held the band down for two years. When we got Ira here and we changed the band around things started to move.

DEB: We played the first "Psychedelic" event in the city. They had a big show at a club called The Cavern and this was even before The Kings ever even played New York City.

MICHAEL: They were great shows.

DEB: It was us and, uh, two bands opened for us. One was called Oh god

MICHAEL: Mental Floss and

RUDI: And the Exploding Mind Dimension.

MICHAEL: And Elan and I were at that show. That was when we saw The Fuzztones for the first time. That's how we got into the band.

B.O.B: How were the other bands?

DEB: The Exploding Mind Dimension. They were just put together for the night. It was the first psychedelic event in the city. When was that '81?

RUDI: Yeah.

DEB: It was a wild night. It was one of the best shows we ever played. They had acid punch

RUDI: Topless go go girls

MICHAEL: They had body painting psychedelic light show.

B.O.B: Were people really into it?

RUDI: Oh yeah. 900 paying customers.

MICHAEL: Yeah, they had two consecutive nights and they had two consecutive nights each weekend. They did two of these shows and they were about six or seven months apart. The place was full each night.

DEB: The scene here has been happening for a long time, and it's been growing, but it has been underground.

RUDI: The thing is, even though it's been happening, slowly but surely, the press hasn't covered it 'til this year.

B.O.B: What were the early days of The Fuzztones like before there was a large garage movement?

RUDI: It was almost impossible to get gigs. One of the problems is, now, because of that, a lot of people think we jumped on the bandwagon, because they didn't hear about us for the last three years. We were working really hard. We had to play little dumps that no one came to.

MICHAEL: It was interesting. Ron Rimsite wrote in 99th Floor. Look at these "upstart" bands and he talks about us and The Vipers who've been cranking it out for more than three years. They're not upstart bands.

B.O.B: Visually, The Fuzztones are wild and exciting, do you think this will cause a problem in recording?

ELAN: These people can't be controlled.

ALL: Laughter.

ELAN: Once we take the appropriate sedatives, then there's no problem.

IRA: Peel the drums off the ceiling.

ELAN: Cause our brains have tuned into the rhythm of a strobelight and when we went into the studio we had to get the mood right, so we did a few things It's gotta come from the most the least developed part of your brain. You have to blank out the rest of it

MICHAEL: In other words PRIMITIVE!

ELAN: It's the part of the brain that's connected to the webbed feet and the fetus.

MICHAEL: Reptilian. Still connected to the gills!

B.O.B: You just did a tour with The Lords of The New Church. What cities did you play?

ALL: Philadelphia, Harrisburg, Washington D.C.,

Long Island, NYC, Transylvania, Hoboken.

B.O.B: What was the response to your raw, garage punk sound?

MICHAEL: They kinda stood there with their mouths open?

ELAN: That egged Rudi on, of course, especially when the girls were doin' it.

B.O.B: What was it like to tour with an "established" band?

RUDI: It sucks. (Laughter).

DEB: When you're an opening band you're main function is to test the P.A. system for the main band. We rarely get sound checks and are generally not treated with any respect. Yet it's a great opportunity to get our sound out to a large audience. So it's got it's pros and cons.

B.O.B: For those reading this in England, describe what a Fuzztones show is like?

IRA: Well, I see bodies flying through the audience. I'm behind most of the amplifiers and stuff so all I hear is, like ROAR! This wall of sound! If you get the right audience at the right time, they really get crazy.

DEB: We were waitin' for the National Guard to come out when we played Harrisburg. We caused a scene. We went into a restaurant ...

MICHAEL: The Ponderosa Steak House

DEB: And immediately the manager, we were like walkin' around with our trays, and the manager came out and ushered us to the back

RUDI: And then it took them a half hour to prepare the catfood they gave us.

DEB: Anyhow, we got off the track

ELAN: Basically what happens is we tap an inner insanity in peoples minds, which depends on how willing they are to open up to it. Once they let it in, what happens is their minds sorta, you know, like convulse and spark and

MICHAEL: You get the primitive rock rollin'.

IRA: Once you hit that spot in your brain, your chain reactions (inaudible) right off your brain Your brain's like a flat sphere with no convulsions anymore.

MICHAEL: A blob of moving flesh.

B.O.B: Okay, are there any current sixties style bands you like?

DEB: You mean presently of this era? The Slickee Boys

ELAN: Definitely The Outta Place. Michael likes The Chesterfield Kings.

RUDI: The Barking Spyzers from Uranus!

B.O.B: Peppy Castro of the Blues Magoos is a big fan of The Fuzztones. Is there any chance of working with him in the future?

RUDI: Yeah, it's a possibility. We've discussed it and there may be something in the future.

B.O.B: The Fuzztones have made a video, can you tell me what it's like?

RUDI: No we can't

ELAN: We erased it by accident (laughter).

RUDI: It's fast, it's hard, it's mean, it's ugly, it's primitive.

MICHAEL: And it's gone! (more laughter).

ELAN: It's 16 milimeter to begin with and that

RUDI: Like the best porno movies.

MICHAEL: Total teen trash.

IRA: (imitating a black's voice) It's scary and shit. Scare de shit outta me

B.O.B: Has it been shown anywhere?

DEB: It's been shown in clubs (Peppermint Lounge/ 9:30 Club). It's been shown on cable TV and it's gonna be shown on MTV's Basement Tapes Show. We've taken it to some other clubs.

B.O.B: What was the shooting like?

MICHAEL: It was a total party. Andy Christensen filmed it at a small club on Deb's birthday. We invited a lotta cool people down and everyone dressed real cool and everybody moved real fast. It's like "Pandora's Box" from Riot On The Sunset Strip. We put in a whole buncha inserts from horror movies and stuff and it all works. Ya know "The Witch", you know the lyrics to "The Witch" and everything with old horror movie footage intercut inbetween.

ELAN: We're not gonna pay royalties on any of those clips so don't give our address.

MICHAEL: We found 'em in the garbage so it doesn't matter.

B.O.B: Are you anxious to do more visual work?

RUDI: Well, Deb's really lookin' forward to the porno flick she's doin' with Greg Prevost. (Laughter).

MICHAEL: Actually, she's gonna be a siamese blonde sandwich between Andy and Ori (laughter).

ELAN: It's called "Beauty And The Nest".

DEB: It depends on what you mean by more visual work, if you're talkin' about

RUDI: Yeah, it's called Debbie Does The Psychedelic Scene. (Laughter).

DEB: Will you wait a minute! If you're talkin' about something of much higher quality and gettin more publicity, of course we want to, but we don't want it to look hi tech.

MICHAEL: Our's is film converted to video. It looks like an old AIP motion picture and it looks real cool. That was the whole point.

B.O.B: As for making records, what are your immediate plans?

RUDI: Well, we have a cut, "Ward 81" on the Rebel Kind compilation. And a cut ("99th Floor) on a flexidisc inside this months issue of 99th. Floor Magazine. We just got done recording our first 45, "Bad News Travels Fast" and "Brand New Man (And A Brand New Car)", which should be out in February on our own label unless someone picks it up first. Also, we recorded "Green Slime" for an upcoming Voxx comp called *Better Living Thru Chemistry*, which is scheduled to come out in January.

B.O.B: Do you think teens will ever again embrace punk garage grunge or do you think it's too late to save the world from dance oriented mush?

MICHAEL: The synthesizer thing that was big in New York City five years ago is big in Iowa right now. This is what will be the wave in the country in five years And the best thing is, it's a good time.

RUDI: We're dance oriented garage grunge.

DEB: Unlike disco, it's a different kinda dancin' like they do in a red square. This is wild,

wig-out, uncontrollable frenzy.

RUDI: The difference is we play from the gut, we play from our (inaudible), whereas commercial bands play from their wallets.

B.O.B: Presently, what are your fave records?

ELAN: Jerry Lee Lewis.

MICHAEL: "Get Yourself Home" by The Pharoahs. I've been listening to total British R&B lately!

RUDI: Bo Diddley, Esqurita and The Killer. It's funny, we play all this psychedelic music and I listen to lots of sixties stuff, but my favourite stuff is by the guys who started it all.

DEB: I only listen to psychedelic stuff. My fave records are by The Music Machine, Thirteenth Floor Elevators, Chocolate Watchband, I could go on and on.

RUDI: "Green Slime" by Green Slime.

B.O.B: In five years, where would you like to see The Fuzztones?

RUDI: Well, where I would not like to see us is like

IRA: In a dark alley.

RUDI: Like in some rubber room.

ELAN: Six feet under the ground, I'd sorta like to avoid.

RUDI: I'd like to do the Vegas circuit with The Standells and Question Mark and The Mysterians.

IRA: The Borscht Belt.

RUDI: Really, I would say our goal is to make a comfortable living playing for people who really dig us. I don't care if we make it really big, just as long as we can make a living.

B.O.B: Where do you think music is going now?

RUDI: Well, I think the garage movement that's happening now and it is a movement. It'll take about five years and garage will be the new thing. I think within the next five years you'll see Rockin bands on American Bandstand. The Fleshtones have already been on it. It'll just keep going from there. You can't stop it. Ever since the fifties they've been tryin' to bury rock and roll putting Chuck Berry in jail, ending Jerry Lee's career and

continued on page 17



COMING TO A HEAD



THE THREE O'CLOCK: 16 TAMBOURINES
Frontier FLP1012

"Baroque Hoedown", the 3 O'Clock's debut 12 inch last Spring was not to everybody's taste, critics citing it as too twee, preferring the denser, more psychedelic music that the band's Mike Quercio and Louis Gutierrez had played in the Salvation Army. I, on the other hand, played it to death, being a sucker for Quercio and drummer Benair's fascination for English sixties pop (1966-68) which seemed to heavily colour the band's sound.

Therefore I was really looking forward to their first full length album, "16 Tambourines", a name coined incidentally by producer Earle Mankey. In some respect it lives up to the promise of "Baroque" and in some ways comes as quite a disappointment. Put it this way, for people hoping for more of Quercio's mindbending lyrics, clouds of psycho guitars and keyboards, then forget it if nothing else this record successfully exorcises any last vestiges of the Salvation Army, only "A Day In Erotica" with it's backwards instrumental tracks and weird effects hinting at those heady heights.

The band are now pursuing a very poppy, commercial sound, still with echoes of sixties music but mid sixties music of an essentially lightweight kind, more Monkees than Johns Children, more Herman's Hermits than Pink Floyd. There's nothing wrong with such influences but you're left with the feeling that the material is insubstantial, weak kneed. However things get off to a flying start with "Jet Fighter", a compelling slab of eighties power pop and what's wrong with that? It's got thundering percussion from Benair, strong chorus hook and eerie talk-over effects. Where the LP does fall down is on side two, firstly on their version of the Bee Gee's "In My Own Time" which sounds contrived and on "When Lightning Starts" which is the band's attempt to perform a Quercio original to a mid 60's Tamla Motown arrangement and they simply come unstuck, the brass drowns out the rest of the song and the rhythm section can't cut the muster of those ace Detroit black musicians: it's even lamer than the Style Council! Elsewhere Quercio seems to be exploring naive, childlike areas of experience, "And So We Run" being the best example.

Reports from America suggest that the 3 O'Clock have come in for a lot of flak for this record and that all is no longer rosy in the garden. That's a shame because they are talented and, given half the chance, Mike Quercio could make something of himself as a songwriter, the material here proving that he has an almost McCartney-esque ear for melody. I guess we'll have to wait and see what happens.

Nigel

GREEN ON RED: GRAVITY TALKS
Siash 1 - 23964

On the evidence of their two previous mini albums, particularly the disappointing Down There release, I was prepared to think of Green On Red as one of the less interesting bands on the L.A. scene. "Gravity Talks" has made me choke on my

preconceptions and reconsider my hastiness: it stands as one of 1983's most vital releases.

Not for these boys the refined studied pop approach of the 3 O'Clock or The Rain Parade, Green On Red are a rough rock 'n' roll band and in singer/guitarist/composer Dan Stuart they have a potential star and that's not to underestimate the talents of bassist Jack Waterson, drummer Alex McNicol and multi-instrumentalist Chris Cacavas. Following successful production chores with the Gun Club and the Dream Syndicate, Chris D. has brought out the best in Stuart's latest compositions, the material making for a most compelling record, full of emotion and bite.

Gone are the last vestiges of that creepy Seeds/Doors sound; instead the band seem to draw more on the spirit of the sixties than on the actual sounds. It's as much Woody Guthrie as the Buffalo Springfield! Dan's lyrics show that his feelings come from gut level, there's a mixture of optimism and bleakness, but he always shows compassion whilst his vocals ache with humanity as a tune like "Old Chief" readily testifies. "Brave Generation" is destined to become something of an eighties' anthem: over Cacavas's very "Blonde On Blonde" inspired keyboard and the rhythm section kicking like "Big Pink" era Band, Stuart articulates the hopes and fears of his generation in the most succinct way since a bug-eyed Johnny Rotten sneered onto the scene. There's no taking sides however: he ultimately just believes in people as people, young or old, rich or poor, American or Russian, black or white.

Elsewhere there's the poignant melancholy of "Cheap Wine" which will set the hearts of beatsters a-pounding, the escalating Gothic psychedelia of "Narcolepsy" and their attempt at a pop song in the title cut. For lovers of feedback guitar, listen to the scorching playing of guest Matt Piucci of the Rain Parade on "Snakebit".

This is a very reassuring record in view of all the gloss that your Phil Collins and co. would like to pass off as ultimate music. "Gravity Talks" isn't the answer to the world's problems but it certainly makes you feel better to know that there are others out there trying to make something of this weird thing called life.

Nigel

THE PRISONERS: THE WISERMISERDELMELZA
Big Beat WIK19

Over the past twelve months The Prisoners have become one of the most exciting and satisfying live acts on the London club circuit whilst their debut LP "A Taste of Pink" has gained heavy airings on the turntable in the Bucketfull of Brains headquarters. Graham Day, their singer/guitarist, proved that he could write good songs and the whole band showed themselves to be one of the strongest, most musicianly units around.

So it's with a good deal of sadness that I have to register my disappointment with this, their second album. Let's make it plain from the outset that "The Wisermiserdelmelza" is no bad record, it still towers above most of the other U.K. LPs released in 1983 and the majority of the material is in essence as powerful if not more so than on their debut. I guess the initial problem lies in transferring their live sound on to vinyl and this, "A Taste of Pink" successfully achieved; it was raw, passionate, melodic, immediate. "Wiser" is a real studio album, "properly" produced by Phil Chevron and, from what I can gather, the group are pleased with the results. After many listens, I still get the feeling that the combination is a mismatch with Chevron failing to grasp what The Prisoners are all about. Songs like "Hurricane" and "Love Me Lies" suffer from a muddy, turgid sound and a lack of edge. These tunes should be leaping out of the grooves in attack, instead they come over as dull and ineffectual. It's only on the quieter material, the ballads that Chevron successfully draws out their best - the trumpet solo on the brooding "Tonight" is a nice touch, the

acoustic guitars on "Think Of Me" make for a Four Pennies feel whilst "Far Away" long a favourite from their live sets comes over well: I was hoping for some bursts of Day's creative feedback but the Manzarek inspired organ is equally effective and the guitar break suitably acid.

For lovers of sixties psychedelic artwork, the sleeve design is a feast for the eyes especially the back cover. My reservations apart, the "Wisermisdermelza" does at least show the band developing, leaving behind their sixties r'n'b roots/Jam-isms and Day's songwriting is showing definite signs of maturing and confidence; not sure if I like your tendencies towards gruff vocals though, Graham. Put it this way, The Prisoners are soon going to be one of the groups in British pop if you give them your support now. I just wish I felt more comfortable with this album, damn it!

Nigel

THE REBEL KIND: VARIOUS ARTISTS
Sounds Interesting Records
P.O. Box 54, Stone Harbor, N.J. 08247, USA

THE TRAIN TO DISASTER: VARIOUS ARTISTS
Bona Fide Records
P.O. Box 185, Red Lion, PA 17356, USA

Two U.S. compilation albums, but two very different kettles of fish!

The Rebel Kind is one of the strongest comp. LPs to appear in ages, definitely on par with the great Warf Rat Tales record from last year. It's a sampler featuring many of the best garage and nouveau psychedelic bands to emerge from the North American continent in recent times. Many of the names will already be familiar to B.O.B. readers, there's True West with their rendition of "Lucifer Sam", The Long Ryders with "And She Rides", Plasticland with "Elongations" (showing an unlikely 13th Floor Elevators influence), The Last, The Sickidz, The Unclaimed - better still there are some obscurer outfits who are easily as good as the aforementioned groups.

You can read about The Fuzztones elsewhere in this issue: "Ward 81" is an excellent introduction to their brand of psychedelic madness even if the guitar solo veers off into some unwelcome Carlos Santana-isms - it has an unnerving edge made worse by the speech before the song begins. There's r'n'b from the Viceroy's and the Miracle Workers, sugary sixties pop from the Shout, garage thrash from Sweden's the Nomads. My particular fave, though, is "Shadows of Rainbows" by the United States of Existence, a group whom you're going to be hearing a lot more of in these pages. They've been around for a while now with little in the way of vinyl to show for their muse, only the clarion cry of "Return to the Psychedelic" on Vox's "Battle of The Garages" from 1981 - and, boy, what a class song that was. "Shadows" sees them in equally fine form, echoes of the Blues Magoos, Bohemian Vendetta and the Electric Prunes. Sounds Interesting promise a mini LP from them in the near future. Some of those L.A. bands had better look out, U.S.E. are a force to be reckoned with.

"The Train To Disaster" is something else. Although it lacks the musical strength of "The Rebel Kind", it sure compensates with its off the wall character, bizarreness, weirdness, sense of fun! It's music from the darker side of the mushroom: creepy, uncompromising, fearless. Arm yourself with a good sense of humour, a little mynd-whisking refreshment and you're going to get a bucketful of pleasure from this little waxing. Any record that starts with a song, "Frogs In Our Town" performed by the Lone Ketamine Millipede has to be good!

"Train" is like a ghost ride through some of the stranger ends of the pop spectrum: variety is the key, whether it's the near metallic thrash of the Velvet Monkeys or the garage grunge of the underrated Slickee Boys' "Nagasaki Neuter". Incidentally the Slickees also get in on the act with "Invisible People" on the "Rebel Kind". Billy Synth and the Turnups execute some more of their

synthesizer brain explosions with "The Mask", a track that has my wife run, screaming from the room (... and I thought only the good Captain could do that!) The most bizarre track is by the German group Ronnie Urini and the Last Poets who pulverize Grace Slick's "White Rabbit" - a confusing Germanic rendition that includes an almost note for note copy of the guitar solo on the Damned's version of this old psychedelic anthem!!!! George Brigman throws in walls and walls of Hendrix style geetar on his "My Cherie": fans of the more thoughtful side of Randy California/Spirit should check out Brigman's cassette "I Can Hear The Ants Dancing" available from the same address. If you're just after some good old plain psychedelia, then the Beatnik Flies "Fantastic Light Show" and the Mad Violet's "Acceleration" should be your cup of meat. The latter combo particularly impress me, very Great Society-ish, plenty of spine to their material, they'll hopefully appear in Issue 9 of this magazine.

I can't see "Train" getting a U.K. release but "The Rebel Kind" should be out soon in France, probably with the 3 O'Clock replacing the True West cut. However difficult they might prove to track down, try and grab a listen. With such creative records as these around, who needs the Top 40, the NME, Spandau Ballet and a thousand other prannets!

Nigel

TOM WAITS: SWORDFISHTROMBONES ISLAND ILPS 9762

I suggest you purchase this LP immediately. I suggest that you dump some of them cute ideas that you may have and Shell Out. Swordfishtrombones is a revelation to me. OK, I know that Tom has been around for some time and that you is hip. But if you ain't brother - you better beware. Waits (as a recent appearance on that appalling "Loose Talk" programme demonstrated) is a real nice guy. He doesn't fit into that rock n roll bullshit. I suggest that you buy this LP immediately.

Tony Moon

THE RAIN PARADE

As you will have read elsewhere in this issue, David Roback and The Rain Parade parted company at the turn of the year David is now making some fascinating and exciting new music in Clay Allison whilst The Rain Parade are continuing as a quartet. Issue 8 was going to include a huge article /interview on the band - sadly this is no longer applicable but I love their debut LP so much, I couldn't waste the following review I'd written about it.

The band have come to mean a lot to me over the last twelve months or so: their debut LP "Emergency Third Rail Power Trip" (ENIGMA 19) should be in the home of every Bucketful of Brains' reader by now: it's an essential addition to the continuing psychedelic tradition started back in the sixties. Sure with a title like that I was expecting a full blown mind expanding sleeve artwork, but like the music inside the cover, the front jacket is understated, only those coloured balloons giving the game away! It's a record that's going to sit comfortably next to your copies of "Underwater Moonlight" and "Kilimanjarro". You'll need it close at hand, because you'll want to play it constantly. "Emergency" kind of creeps up on you; on the first couple of listens, you think "nice" but you're waiting for that big ooomph! It never comes; instead you feel wrapped in a soft psychedelic envelope of good feeling. It's a subtle effect, none of that big clobbering thump, you got from the Dream Syndicate's debut album, say!

The record starts with a whole heap of Big Star style guitar notes and we're into "Talking in my sleep", a David Roback led song with plenty of good hooks this should have been a 45 because it's got hit potential! If R.E.M. can crack the U.S. top 40 then why not the Rain Parade? Up next is a re-recording of "This Can't Be Today", originally to be found on Warf Rat Tales. I can't add much to my comments in Issue 6, save to say that David admits that the

Beatles' "All Too Much" echoes were intentional. "I Look Around" is pretty much like the Warf Rat version, too, with added backwards guitars: it's particularly notable on this track how important percussion is to the overall group sound with Eddie Kalwa's marching drums giving the song a sense of drama and urgency. "1½ Hours Ago" is another fine song from the pen of Steven Roback; it's a good example of how the Parade can combine a sense of the big beat with more psychedelic leanings. The opening section is guitar dominated with a strong drum part whilst the middle part floats ethereally away with Will's keyboards and Steve's gentle voice. Side One ends with a David Roback love lament "Carolyn's Song", the most relaxed tune on the record, shot through with sadness and melancholia. Did somebody mention Syd Barrett? It's certainly the combo at their most early Pink Floydian.

Side Two opens with a familiar jangle of 12-string guitar and we're into "What's She Done To Your Mind", taken slightly faster than on the original 45 just listen to the way Piucci's got his Byrds' influences off pat, pure "Chestnut Mare", this is inspiring stuff. The second cut, an extended piece jointly written by the Roback brothers and Matt, "Look At Merri" is perhaps the choice item on the LP. Constructed in three segments, it towers above the rest of the album: the lazy synth loop/loope gives way to a chorus/crescendo which is then proceeded by a twangy Ventures guitar break (presumably from David). The song then doubles back on itself with a slow psychedelic waltz - carousell organ, cymbal, Moby Grape's "Indifference" guitar colourings and floaty vocals. After a repeat of this, the tune bursts into life as Matt's lead majestically spirals then swoops in the surging final passage. Not since the song "Marquee Moon" will your adrenalin have been pounding so hard, it takes your breath away! "Saturday Asylum" follows; another winner from Steven with swirling Country Joe & The Fish organ and Piucci pulling out all the stops with his guitar solo - phew. There's a tinkling acoustic guitar, too, which is much higher in the mix than it was on the "Radio Tokyo Tapes" LP. The album goes out in the best way possible with the original version of "Kaleidoscope" (taken from the 45). This is still a pinnacle achievement, pure psychedelic essence! How does Steven come up with them? Drone guitars, organ, sitar, guitar feedback, fuzz guitar, tambourine all delicately balanced on a booming drum beat. A classic in every respect.

If you haven't already shelled out for this masterpiece, you must be stupid, broke or scared of import prices! I rate it more highly than anything The Soft Boys ever achieved and for fuck's sake, let's not allow the Rain Parade to go the same way as they did. Also why has no enterprising U.K. record company licensed the LP for release over here yet? It certainly beats 99.9% of the dreck put out in the U.K. for 1983.

Nigel



Shed your tears for a Parade we'll never see in Europe.

TURKEY BONES AND THE WILD DOGS



photo by Mike Tighe

"Weeeeelll since ma baby left me"

1983 was the year that the old rock n roll hip went into hospital for yet another pin and plate operation. The agile spring chicken that had humped its way from the back of some juke in Chicago into a million whiter than white homes - has finally ended up on the dinner table.

"I found a new place to dwell"

Ladies and gentlemen, Turkey Bones and the Wild Dogs. The scuziest outfit to hit the stage since I don't know when I give ya Turkey on voice. Piece on guitar. Herman on Skins and the eclectic Bad man Missouri on bass. Turkey and the Bones have started to fling some of that phlegm right back where it started. The Bones are from the Finsbury Park part of London. I was first destroyed by them in the summer after John Eichler (that man again) from the Hope and Anchor demanded that I come and see them.

"Wants to see my credentials - when I told him that I have none".

The Bones rattle like no other group.
The Bones shamble like no other group.
The Bones cut like no other group.
Sometimes they descend headlong into a furious farmyard cock fight, that leaves them running around with their heads chopped right off - the farmyard is a crazy place baby!

Turkey Bones have at last dumped the whole let's be in a band and rehearse and be clever idea in the can. (I have been guilty). What you get is a virtually unrehearsed stream of energy which has been pretty successfully captured on a single last year. This was "Goldfish" b/w "Zoology".

I won't bore you anymore with expletives, suffice to say that the Bones are "fast and bulbous".

Tony Moon

JUICE ON THE LOOSE

What have Alexis Koerner, Chris Farlowe, Doug Sahm, Ian Dury, Ronnie Lane, Eric Clapton, The Action, Ace, Frankie Miller, The Beach Boys, Roger Chapman, Roy Wood, Young Jessie, Chuck Higgins and Mickey Jupp got in common?

Answer? Juice on the Loose, the London pub circuit's most varied, and probably longest-serving r'n'b band. The foregoing list gives the best idea words can of the influences at work, but we should add New Orleans and Louisiana music, Chicago blues and sixties soul to get nearer the full picture.

The connection between the luminaries in the first paragraph is that Juice have played with them all, collectively or individually, over the years. And that's the way it still is. The band has a hard core of four, expanding up to seven or eight musicians, playing at its weekly residencies at London's Pegasus, Bull & Gate, Cricketers, Half Moon and other pubs, and the line-up never seems to be the same twice running. They all seem to be in two bands at once what's more. Forget that they've recorded next to nothing, this is a LIVE outfit.

The Juice story goes back to around 1977-8. All the people now connected with the band were playing in various duos different nights in the King's Head pub, Islington, North London. Although its now better known as a fringe theatre venue with the curious habit of displaying its prices in old pounds, shillings and pence, it was then mainly a music venue.

Ron Kavana, vocals, lead guitar and frontman, remembers that Juice started there by accident:

"A lot of us were down there one night and I walked Champion Jack Dupree (a blues singer long domiciled in Europe who once recorded for Mike Vernon's Blue Horizon label). He wanted to play a gig at the King's Head the following night with some of us backing him. We got a band together but he never turned up, he was ill. So we did the gig ourselves, and that was when Juice on the Loose started". At that time Diz Watson, now of New Orleans-style band Diz and the Doorman, was also involved. The Champion Jack Dupree session never happened, but Juice stayed together at this time as a house band in London to back visiting American r'n'b and blues musicians.

At that time the line-up (which even then was subject to constant change) was Kavana on vocals and guitar, Diz Watson on piano, ex High Road Charlie Hart, (as in Kilburn and the) bass, Geraint Watkins, accordion, Ed Dean, slide guitar and Gerry Macilduff, drums. It was this line-up which cut The Blue Flames Boogie. This was broadcast on Charlie Gillett's legendary Radio London (BBC, not the pirate ship) show Honky Tonk, and eventually released on Gillett's Honky Tonk Demos in late 1979.

A digression is called for. Those of you who lived

outside the range of BBC Radio London's niggardly transmitter won't know of the crucial role which Gillett's show played between 1972 and the end of 1978. Starting as a rock 'n' roll and blues show following the initial success of Gillett's Sound of the City book, it gradually broadened out to cover the emerging London pub-rock scene of Kilburn and the High Roads, Bees Make Honey (of whom more later), Ducks DeLuxe, Ace and other pub-dwelling outfits. Along the way Gillett's policy, previously unknown on British radio, of encouraging local bands to send in demos, led to the discovery of Elvis Costello, Graham Parker, Dire Straits, Chas and Dave and many others. The whole story would probably take another article, but it sets the scene. It's successor, Stuart Colman's Echoes, is enjoyable but more traditionalist.

Anyway, back to the beginning. Ron Kavanagh comes from Fermoy, in the Republic of Ireland, where he played in many local bands unknown outside their locality. His first recording came with a psychedelic band called Loudest Whisper, who made a now-rare (which doesn't seem to trouble him) album for Polydor. "It's got me with long hair, beads and flowers on the cover. It was all concepts and brown rice", he says. From there he played solo spots, supports and sessions in Britain, joining an ill-fated early 70s package tour with Fruuup, Roger Ruskin Spear and String Driven Thing, as opener.

"It was the end of the package tour era where four acts with nothing in common were sent out. Some people get booed off. I got booed on that one, no-one wanted to hear an acoustic blues act". Ludicrous introduction like "the new Bob Dylan" didn't help, and being introduced once too often as "ladeez and gentlemen, Ron Kavernag" led him to drop the 'gh' and become plain Kavana.

"The first decent band I was in was after that when I joined Panama Red. They played acoustic bluegrass and advertised in the Melody Maker for someone who played guitar and mandolin. I didn't play mandolin then, so I learned fast and joined them. The other people in the band were Arthur Kitchener, who's now in the Balham Alligators with me and Geraint Watkins, and Keith Chiver, who's now a country music 'expert' for the BBC. I can't remember the other guy's name. We played Sunday lunchtimes and evenings at the Hope & Anchor before they started having live music every night", says Ron.

From here Ron moved into backing bands, so many that the story gets confused. He toured with Chris Farlowe when the latter's Out Of Time was a hit in Britain - second time around - in 1976. "Alexis Koerner was on that too, some called it the last great British r'n'b package". A band containing many people later to be associated with Juice backed both Koerner and Farlowe, and did their own spot. A feature of Juice is that everyone involved is and seems long to have been in about four bands at once and also helping out friends and backing other musicians. "It's the only way to make a living from it", says Kavana. During the time that Juice was coming together he was also in the final line-up of pub-rock pioneers Bees Make Honey.

"By this time Bees Make Honey was myself, Fran Byrne (now Juice drummer), Barry Richardson, who'd been in it from the start, and Mick Molloy (lately of the London Apaches). In fact Barry was never in the business full-time, he worked for Schweppes all the time Bees were going. Around 1979 he was offered a job with the firm in Japan and went. So Bees Make Honey is in limbo rather than actually split-up. When he comes back it might get revived. I was playing all kinds of gigs at that time, it seemed I was following Albert Lee around, as I got gigs which he'd just left!" he explained.

Ron played an ill-fated one-off with Chas and Dave around this time at Fulham's New Golden Lion. "I turned up with my guitar and they wouldn't let me in. I told them I was playing in the band that night, and they said 'Oh yes, sure, we know Chas and Dave are a duo'".

And so to the current Juice set-up. They play residencies in three or four London venues which they



l-r: Fran Byrne, Bam King, Frank Mead, Nick Pentelow, Ron Kavana and Charlie Hart (front).

like, with occasional outings elsewhere, drawing their line-up usually from Ron, Charlie Hart, Bam King (of The Action, Mighty Baby and Ace) on rhythm guitar, Fran Byrne (of Bees, Ace and Frankie Miller) on drums and horn player Nick Pentelow, whose experience includes stints with The Beach Boys, Roy Wood's Wizzard, Roger Chapman and Steve Gibbons. Frank Mead, also a horn player, is the latest addition, a veteran of Mickey Jupp, Red Beans and Rice and one of Manfred Mann's Earthbands. Other friends drop in and out. The night we did this interview Geraint Watkins was back for a few gigs after a while away with Shakin' Stevens and Dave Edmunds. He was filling in time while Edmunds was off the road. Ron and Geraint are also part of cajun band the Balham Alligators, with Arthur Kitchener of Panama Red. In his spare moments Ron's also in a country duo with Gary Rickard, back at the King's Head where it all started, called the Elderly Brothers. There's also a bigger version of this called the Foolhardy Brothers.

When they're not keeping pub punters dancing at the weekly residencies, they still back and record with visiting American stars, so adding to the Juice recorded output. Under their own names the record total (see discography at end) amounts to track on the Honky Tonk album, two very obscure singles and an album 'Juice On The Loose' released by Chiswick in 1982. Although this sold modestly in Britain it surprisingly took off in Germany, where Ron claims their tour was met with "two thousand kids trying to tear our clothes off".

To take recent activities in no particular order, Juice met up with Doug Sahm and Augie Meyers last year when they were in Britain to promote Sir Douglas Quintet's 'Quintessence' Sonet album. Sahm and Meyers saw them playing, liked what they heard and ended up doing a couple of London gigs with Juice backing, which led in turn to them recording with Augie Meyers, four tracks of which came out on the Ace label's Texas Dancehall Favourites collection. Ace (not to be confused with the band) is the reissuing arm of Chiswick Records, both connected with the Rock On shop, purveyors of good music in London's Camden Town.

They've also played with Clarence Frogman Henry, Big Jay McNeely, Chuck Higgins and Young Jessie, the last three of who played an r'n'b festival in London in August 1983. Also there was Willie Egan. "Ted Carroll (proprietor of Rock On and Chiswick) was visiting America and people told him to check out Willie Egan, who he only knew from a few records. Egan's a Louisiana pianist who recorded a bit in the early fifties, never got the breaks and quit. Ted brought him over to London, and it was amazing. The guy hadn't played to an audience for 26 years, but he was great. He could have been another Fats Domino", said Ron.

McNeely, Higgins, Young Jessie and 'Sea Cruise' man Frankie Ford are due in Britain for the 1984 Rock 'N' Roll Festival at Caister, Norfolk, and Juice will be there backing and doing their own act. Young Jessie, by the way, was the third, ultra-deep, voice on The Coasters 'Young Blood'. Meanwhile, there's a second album in preparation.

We got on to influences, at which point Charlie Hart joined in the conversation. There's more influences to this lot than anyone's had hot dinners, but Ron picked out Snooks Eglin, Gatemouth Brown and Cornell Dupree. Charlie mentioned an enthusiasm for the music of black South Africa, where musicians have absorbed r'n'b influences into their own Kwela tunes and come up with a unique blend. "Whenever people see an accordion they think they're hearing cajun, but with Charlie it can just as easily be South African-based", Ron says.

Interview over, they went on stage, and that night it was the Juice 'big band' with Kavana, Hart, Byrne, King, Pentelow and Mead augmented by Geraint Watkins on keyboards. Two hours later, after about three encores, they stagger off leaving an audience of around 300 dancers exhaustedly draining pints. People were dancing from the second number of the first set. This band will never be fashionable, but their set of blues and r'n'b standards, and originals drawing on this past will have an audience as long as rock music is played live. There's not many bands who do it better, and none who do it pretty well every night.

DISCOGRAPHY

ALBUM:

JUICE ON THE LOOSE (Chiswick JOOS 1):

Fanny Mae/Dependent On You/You'll Lose A Good Thing/
Software Breakdown/You're No Good/Boogie Thing/
Party Time/Don't Ever Leave Me/It's Raining/
Time Is The Healer/Kool Daddy/Goin' Home.

SINGLES:

Anyway The Wind Blows/Fermoy (Songwriters Workshop -
number unknown)
Cowboys and Indians/Sweet Love In The Valley
(Songwriters Workshop SW15)

COMPILATION TRACK:

The Blue Flames Boogie (on Honky Tonk Demos -
Oval OVLMS003, also has solo Geraint Watkins track
'Watkins' Brew')

Mark Smulian

some of these changes to occur; the band certainly sounded different on their live dates in November/December when they had Jeff of Cannibals fame, playing electric bass with them, depping for Keith who was in Germany. There's talk that a certain bass player who was once involved with the Milkshakes might be playing some dates with them using both acoustic and electric instruments yes, I was wondering what had happened to Bertie, too. One of the things that appeals to me most about the Sting-rays is their over-riding sense of fun and humour, something that found it's voice in the Great Banana Men EP hoax of last Summer:- basically a recording of 3 tracks, the Crusher, Surfin' Bird and Love Me which The Cramps had popularised. The record was promoted in such a way as to give the impression that the music was by some pre-Cramps mythical sixties garage band from Minneapolis. All in all it was a very successful wheeze and the record did very well in the indie charts. It was natural enough then that I got the perpetrators of this heinous crime to give me all the dope behind it!!

Bal: Basically it's a piss take of the Cramps.

Alec: And the press as well, it's just the mindless adulation that they command and the people who read them. I think we all agree that the Cramps are a good band.

Bal: We wanted to do something like "Farmer John" with party noises and that sort of thing. We wanted to record it but not under our own name because it's such a cliché - everyone's done it. The Cramps have done all these tracks before and much better. We used the record to point out that the Cramps didn't write any of them originally, which a lot of people still think. Alec did the sleeve notes and the label, I got a bunch of bananas down the road, photocopied them, cut them out and stuck them down - got the photograph and put the bananas on the head.

Alec: The whole thing took about 45 minutes to record

Bal: at Pathway when we did "Ah What". We recorded the LP in Denmark Street then went back in the studio to record "Ah What", the last track because we had to get a flanger and a twelve string. We had ten minutes at the end and we played it down - each track is one take - there's loads of mistakes if you listen to it.

The group are still very much associated with the London garage/trash/call it what you will scene but they're evolving: Alec: "As far as we're concerned, we're not a trash band anymore" and Bal amplifies this further, "We're the Sting-rays now, we know what we're trying to do, we've got a job to do and we're tired of being told what we are by other people. "They're still prepared to give credit where credit is due to Mike Spencer and the early nights of trash but you get the sense that they feel frustrated by all the affiliations that label has made for them.

Bal: "The fact is the Sting-rays would not be anywhere and we wouldn't be playing now, we wouldn't be what we are or anything without Mike Spencer because he gave us all our gigs, we didn't have any equipment so we borrowed all theirs, (the Cannibals') everything we owe to him. He was the bloke who found us and picked us up. He set us up on our feet before we got our own gigs he started the trash nights and all of a sudden we started getting publicity and it was great. Then there was a thing in that glossy girl magazine "Number One", 3 lines: "trash is: Medway bands like the Milkshakes and the Sting-rays. You think Christ what have we done!! For about the last year now nearly all the bands have been trying to deny it". Happily the 'Rays are getting bookings outside of the confines of the garage scene as their support spot on the Pretenders' recent Hammersmith Odeon shows attests, perhaps a sign that they're moving on to be bigger and better things.

I parted from the dynamic duo with Bal's words ringing in my ears: "When we started we didn't have our own style but I think we've actually derived a style of our own now. We still believe in rock 'n' roll, we are a rock 'n' roll band! In the current anti-rockist music climate, those are brave words - you know I've got a funny feeling that the Sting-rays are going to claw their way to the top of the pile and on their own terms.

Nigel

HILLY FIELDS REVISITED

(MORE WEST COUNTRY TALES)

Dickie Peterson, Paul Whaley and Colin Hill at the White Horse



photo courtesy of Melody Maker Picture File.

BLUE CHEER reform in Cornwall shock! Well, not exactly, but there's far more truth in that heading than one would suspect. A chance meeting in a local pub last April with a Quicksilver fan revealed that an American named Paul who claimed to have been in Blue Cheer was working in a bakery in Par (near St Austell)! "It can't be Paul Whaley" I commented "We heard about six months ago that he'd passed away". I was sufficiently intrigued however to put my full investigative powers to work and, one week later, was delighted to learn that rumours of said Mr Whaley's demise were grossly exaggerated! I don't know who was most freaked out, Paul at finding an absolute stranger on his doorstep clutching an Oxford Circle single, or me at finding him alive and well and living just 'down the road'. The friendship we developed hooked into the True West article I was preparing at the time and put him back in touch with Jim Keylor and other Cheer acquaintances after a self-imposed exile from the USA of about 12 years. The next thing I knew was collecting the legendary Dickie Peterson from Exeter station and witnessing a most emotional reunion. And now, just 9 months later, Paul is back in California and preparing to don his trusty work gloves and get back into the Blue Cheer drumseat for a lengthy US tour, projected album and hopeful European visit (the first date of which will be at Launceston's White Horse Inn and I kid you not). Leigh Stevens, it seems was offered a shot at the reunion but was too tied up with his horse ranch and other business interests while his replacement in 1968, Randy Holden, is believed to have died in the early '70s (can anyone confirm this?). The guitarist in the current BC is Tony Rainier (his late brother had been an Oxford Circle roadie in '66), a veteran of various recent Peterson ventures and, from the tapes I've heard, he's a more than adequate replacement with a real acid touch and flash persona. So, after years of attempting to 'infiltrate' the Cheer brotherhood we've recently spoken with Paul, Dickie, Ralph Kellogg, Jim Keylor, Eric Albronda (ex and current manager), Jerry Russell (another ex-manager) and even the mysterious Gary Lee Yoder. We've also had a letter from Bruce Stephens and contacted Jack May (another Sacramento musical sidekick) so it looks as though the article we briefly mentioned in the Christmas '82 newsletter is developing into the definitive Blue Cheer and offshoots history which will probably take a whole issue!

Bizarre Cornish happenings don't end with Blue Cheer as Appaloosa Records, after months of apprehension, have unleashed THE AVANT GARDENERS' "Church of the Inner Cosmos" LP. The album and copies of Church News available from: Russell Murch, 79 Dorothy Road, London SW11 2JJ price £4.00 + postage 60p (UK) and £1.50 (Overseas). I first heard the rough demos that comprise side 1 on New Year's Day 1982 when Russell Murch descended upon Hilly Fields and we threw the ancient Cornish boomerang, partially for spiritual guidance but mainly for the divine suffering bruised knuckles provide. Most of the material had been conceived during an all-night C.I.C. 'nature session' at 9 Man's Moor (a Cornish Stone Circle) during which our hero sported a pair of Wellington boots four sizes too large and upon the wrong feet. The Church of the Inner Cosmos is rooted in Celtic mythology and fuses all manner of quasi-religious doctrines and 'un-natural practices' (sensory deprivation and inverted cannibalism to name but two) and this waxing only serves to confuse the open-minded listener as it twists and slides through a bizarre sequence of toons presented in glorious Murchorama. With the Gardeners' slickly-produced "Aztec's Revenge" indefinitely shelved this sees Murch return to his most natural and eccentric instincts assisted by, amongst others, a brace of Brainiacs, Admiral Ian Dunlop, former exploding teardrop Troy Tate, long-suffering Gardener Mike Roberts and Martin Hughes from Any Trouble, all of whom are given ample freedom to express their devotion to the 'sect' in musical terms. It's great to see the Admiral back in action and fascinating to hear the way he and Russell bounce their unique tastes for the absurd off each other and feed on the energy it creates (but how long will we be spared their potentially classic CB version of Macbeth?). Martin Hughes' atmospheric, off-the-wall percussion adds a much-needed new dimension to the Gardeners' music and his work is totally inspired and attuned to the freewheeling spirit of the looser and more experimental pieces.

"C.I.C." stumbles open with the instrumental "Looking for a Sun" and here the quest for spiritual enlightenment begins with Murch on C.I.C.-synth and chopped alien-guitar and Dunlop on sax before the fully-charged band lurch into the anthemic title track. This features Spacejammer snarling such profundities as "We're the Gardeners, the voice of the C.I.C., we eat God's flesh in large proportions and drink the eternal cosmos for tea" as massed Brainiac-guitars spew from the speakers on the verge of feedback. "Loose in the sky" rolls along in finest Muscletone tradition (what memories!) with down-right dirty Dunlop sax and echoey "Bull of the Woods" guitar. It flows out on a spacey jam while backing vocals whoop and swoop with a near-mantric chorus of "My astral plane is hanging loose in the sky and only God knows why" - really ace stuff. "30 Dollars" is as close to straight-down-the-line rock and roll as Russell can get and is based on a notorious excursion to New Orleans with our Texas cousin Davey Baldwin while "spaced as a camel with a damaged spleen", the riproaring crystal lead this time is courtesy of Mike Roberts. "13th Son of Ramases" is a long-time Murch staple and this could be the definitive version. It's 'back-to-nature' intro of sea, birds and obscene sax squeals is reminiscent of 'Song for our Ancestors' as Steve Sunshine sets the heartbeat for Troy Tate's ubiquitous guitar and swirling electronic blanket to merge into layers of indefinable psychedelic sound, the icing supplied by Hughes' flashing percussion.

And here endeth side one

Most of side 2 was recorded at Ian Dublop's converted barn/studio and judging by it's contents one must wonder what hedonistic pursuits the Gardeners indulge in during their frequent forays to the windswept Lizard peninsula. While the opening reprise of "Looking for a sun" has a familiar ring to it in no way prepares us for the chilling adventure that lies ahead. The Gardeners play Wildman Fisher in the shape of "Miss Jennifer Jones lies dead on my doorstep" to an almost pretty C&W-tingued bounce. The famous Murch drawl is evident here, it's stark innocence punctuated by sinister whines and incongruous trombone, pleading for salvation. "The Lecture" features all kinds of wonderful percussion by Martin Hughes as Jennifer Garety seductively details the deviant and masochistic preferences of the cult's

members, complete with coughs, growls and whimpers courtesy of the assembled masses. 'The initiation' complete we progress to 'the blessing' of the Rev Murch in "The force be with you" with it's hypnotic drum and synth patterns and virtually indecipherable meandering vocal. And finally, as the band don size 13 Wellies and shuffle through halls of Sun Ra and Pharoah Sanders we prepare to take that final step to complete spiritual awareness and enter "The Kitchen of Oblivion" (eat yer heart out, Tommy Hall). Here the band are augmented by two reptilian (bona-fide) avantgarde-ners and they blow out with a spacious horn-ensemble instrumental with more excellent percussion and Murch's sporadic random chords. A curious and unexpected close to a continually challenging and compulsive work with it's overtones both dark and humorous. Murch is not a man to sit back and rest laurels upon his receding hairline and this finds him exploring, experimenting and taking a large step towards global domination on behalf of The Church of The Inner Cosmos. Children, open your ears to the joyful noise and be blessed

With the exception of Messrs. Murch, Dunlop and Co. there is currently little interesting musical activity down here on the edge of civilisation although I can recommend three very different projects all of which involve a guy from Exeter named Nick Halliwell. Nick, still only in his very early twenties, is something of a veteran on the local scene and as well as having played in a string of fascinating little bands like Undisputed Colours, Silent Spectrum and The Gift he is a hardened record collector and 60's student. THE GIFT recorded a single at Spaceward Studios in Cambridge which they released independently on the Venus Label, the nearest point of reference to its glorious 1980's folk-tinged rock probably being the sublime "Revolutionary Spirit" by the Wild Swans on Zoo Records (as a brief aside, Paul Simpson of The Swans, with Ian Broudie, was responsible for my fave single of 1983 "Flaming Sword" as CARE, more on them in a future article). Both tracks, "It'll End In Tears" and "Crashing Down", also have flashes of 1966 Love with its ringing guitars and adequately capture the spirit of this mis-understood, maligned and admittedly inconsistent young band who never failed to send me whizzing through some time warp. Nick's latest venture, partially inspired by Julian Cope's fabulous early 1983 Peel session, is a solo cassette of 12 songs titled "Tender Hours". It's basically acoustic Bryan Maclean-guitar and atmospheric accordion with brief flashes of Nick's electric prune - guitar while the lyrics are introspective 1967 Elektra-folk (shades of Pat Kilroy here, David Ackles there and lots of Tim Buckley). "Balance of Arms" is a real gem with its shimmering Spanish-flavoured guitars and the music is wrapped in a fragile aura of honesty and isolation. Nick is also responsible for piecing together THE PALACE STEPPES "tryp up", a cassette album. This material was reputedly recorded in Exeter in 1967 and the mass of unlabelled tapes were discovered by Nick in a friend's attic locked in a Patchouli-scented thyme capsule (tea-chest actually) together with a paisley waistcoat, insect-orb shades, 4 tabs of Strawberry Fields and a warped copy of "My Mind Capsized" by Constable Zippo and his Electric Comode Band. This strange and enigmatic tape comes with a manuscript based around "The Willow Speaks" and the effect it has over the group - it's pure love, beads and meditation acid-punk mentality. Musically, the high spots are the ridiculously over-the-top raga-guitar of "This Lime Tree Bower Prison?" (lyrics courtesy of Coleridge) the savage garage-rock of "I'm Hatching Out", an extended and very psychedelic "Hey Joe" and the hypnotic, trancelike "My Pillar Box Is Green". I have no idea what became of Warren Brandt and his cronies although the percussionist, Plug, briefly played with the equally legendary Fans. More information on this project may be obtained from Nick who will be delighted to supply you with any of the three aforementioned gems, so please write to him at 29 Haldon Road, Exeter.

And I could have sworn I saw Bob Markley driving a plumber's van through Holsworthy the other day. Now, where's the Yellow Pages

Colin

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